

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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NO NAME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WOMAN IN WHITE," &c.

CHAPTER III.

THERE was a pause of a few minutes, while Mrs. Lecount opened the second of the two papers which lay before her on the table, and refreshed her memory by looking it rapidly through. This done, she once more addressed herself to Noel Vanstone carefully lowering her voice, so as to render it inaudible to any one who might be listening in the passage outside.

"I must beg your permission, sir," she began, "to return to the subject of your wife. I do so most unwillingly; and I promise you that what I have now to say about her, shall be said, for your sake and for mine, in the fewest words. What do we know of this woman, Mr. Noel—judging her by her own confession when she came to us in the character of Miss Garth, and by her own acts afterwards at Aldborough? We know that, if death had not snatched your father out of her reach, she was ready with her plot to rob him of the Combe-Raven money. We know that when you inherited the money in your turn, she was ready with her plot to rob *you*. We know how she carried that plot through to the end; and we know that nothing but your death is wanted, at this moment, to crown her rapacity and her deception with success. We are sure of these things. We are sure that she is young, bold, and clever—that she has neither doubts, scruples, nor pity—and that she possesses the personal qualities which men in general (quite incomprehensibly to *me*!) are weak enough to admire. These are not fancies, Mr. Noel, but facts—you know them as well as I do."

He made a sign in the affirmative, and Mrs. Lecount went on:

"Keep in your mind what I have said of the past, sir, and now look with me to the future. I hope and trust you have a long life still before you; but let us, for the moment only, suppose the case of your death—your death leaving this will behind you, which gives your fortune to your cousin George. I am told there is an office in London, in which copies of all wills must be kept. Any curious stranger who chooses to pay

a shilling for the privilege, may enter that office, and may read any will in the place, at his or her discretion. Do you see what I am coming to, Mr. Noel? Your disinherited widow pays her shilling, and reads your will. Your disinherited widow sees that the Combe-Raven money, which has gone from your father to you, goes next from you to Mr. George Bartram. What is the certain end of that discovery? The end is that you leave to your cousin and your friend, the legacy of this woman's vengeance and this woman's deceit—vengeance made more resolute, deceit made more devilish than ever by her exasperation at her own failure. What is your cousin George? He is a generous, unsuspecting man; incapable of deceit himself, and fearing no deception in others. Leave him at the mercy of your wife's unscrupulous fascinations and your wife's unfathomable deceit—and I see the end, as certainly as I see you sitting there! She will blind his eyes, as she blinded yours; and, in spite of *you*, in spite of *me*, she will have the money!"

She stopped; and left her last words time to gain their hold on his mind. The circumstances had been stated so clearly, the conclusion from them had been so plainly drawn, that he seized her meaning without an effort, and seized it at once.

"I see!" he said, vindictively clenching his hands. "I understand, Lecount! She shan't have a farthing. Only tell me what to do—shall I leave it to the admiral?" He paused, and considered a little. "No," he resumed; "there's the same danger in leaving it to the admiral that there is in leaving it to George."

"There is no danger, Mr. Noel, if you will take my advice."

"What is your advice?"

"Follow your own idea, sir. Take the pen in hand again, and leave the money to Admiral Bartram."

He mechanically dipped the pen in the ink—and then hesitated.

"You shall know where I am leading you, sir," said Mrs. Lecount, "before you sign your will. In the mean time, let us gain every inch of ground we can, as we go on. I want the will to be all written out before we advance a single step beyond it. Begin your third paragraph, Mr. Noel, under the lines which leave me my legacy of five thousand pounds."

She dictated the last momentous sentence of the will (from the rough draft in her own possession) in these words:

"The whole residue of my estate, after payment of my burial expenses and my lawful debts, I give and bequeath to Rear-Admiral Arthur Everard Bartram, my Executor aforesaid; to be by him applied to such uses as he may think fit.

"Signed, sealed, and delivered this third day of November, eighteen hundred and forty-seven, by Noel Vanstone, the within-named testator, as and for his last Will and Testament, in the presence of us——"

"Is that all?" asked Noel Vanstone, in astonishment.

"That is enough, sir, to bequeath your fortune to the admiral; and, therefore, that is all. Now let us go back to the case which we have supposed already. Your widow pays her shilling, and sees this will. There is the Combe-Raven money left to Admiral Bartram; with a declaration in plain words that it is his, to use as he likes. When she sees this, what does she do? She sets her trap for the admiral. He is a bachelor, and he is an old man. Who is to protect him against the arts of this desperate woman? Protect him yourself, sir, with a few more strokes of that pen which has done such wonders already. You have left him this legacy, in your will—which your wife sees. Take the legacy away again, in a letter—which is a dead secret between the admiral and you. Put the will and the letter under one cover, and place them in the admiral's possession, with your written directions to him to break the seal on the day of your death. Let the will say what it says now; and let the letter (which is your secret and his) tell him the truth. Say that in leaving him your fortune, you leave it with the request that he will take his legacy with one hand from you, and give it with the other to his nephew George. Tell him that your trust in this matter rests solely on your confidence in his honour, and on your belief in his affectionate remembrance of your father and yourself. You have known the admiral since you were a boy. He has his little whims and oddities—but he is a gentleman from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot; and he is utterly incapable of proving false to a trust in his honour, reposed by his dead friend. Meet the difficulty boldly, by such a stratagem as this; and you save these two helpless men from your wife's snares, one by means of the other. Here, on one side, is your will, which gives the fortune to the admiral, and sets her plotting accordingly. And there, on the other side, is your letter, which privately puts the money into the nephew's hands!"

The malicious dexterity of this combination was exactly the dexterity which Noel Vanstone was most fit to appreciate. He tried to express his approval and admiration in words. Mrs.

Lecount held up her hand warningly, and closed his lips.

"Wait, sir, before you express your opinion," she went on. "Half the difficulty is all that we have conquered yet. Let us say, the admiral has made the use of your legacy which you have privately requested him to make of it. Sooner or later, however well the secret may be kept, your wife will discover the truth. What follows that discovery? She lays siege to Mr. George. All you have done is to leave him the money by a roundabout way. There he is, after an interval of time, as much at her mercy as if you had openly mentioned him in your will. What is the remedy for this? The remedy is to mislead her, if we can, for the second time—to set up an obstacle between her and the money, for the protection of your cousin George. Can you guess for yourself, Mr. Noel, what is the most promising obstacle we can put in her way?"

He shook his head. Mrs. Lecount smiled, and startled him into close attention by laying her hand on his arm.

"Put a Woman in her way, sir!" she whispered in her wildest tones. "We don't believe in that fascinating beauty of hers—whatever you may do. Our lips don't burn to kiss those smooth cheeks. Our arms don't long to be round that supple waist. We see through her smiles and her graces, and her stays and her padding—she can't fascinate us! Put a woman in her way, Mr. Noel! Not a woman in my helpless situation, who is only a servant—but a woman with the authority and the jealousy of a Wife. Make it a condition, in your letter to the admiral, that if Mr. George is a bachelor at the time of your death, he shall marry within a certain time afterwards—or he shall not have the legacy. Suppose he remains single, in spite of your condition—who is to have the money then? Put a woman in your wife's way, sir, once more—and leave the fortune, in that case, to the married sister of your cousin George."

She paused. Noel Vanstone again attempted to express his opinion; and again Mrs. Lecount's hand extinguished him in silence.

"If you approve, Mr. Noel," she said, "I will take your approval for granted. If you object, I will meet your objection before it is out of your mouth. You may say:—Suppose this condition is sufficient to answer the purpose, why hide it in a private letter to the admiral? Why not openly write it down with my cousin's name attached to it, in the will? Only for one reason, sir. Only because the secret way is the sure way, with such a woman as your wife. The more secret you can keep your intentions, the more time you force her to waste in finding them out for herself. That time which she loses, is time gained from her treachery by the admiral—time gained by Mr. George (if he is still a bachelor) for his undisturbed choice of a lady—time gained, for her own security, by the object of his choice, who might otherwise be the first object of your wife's suspicion and your wife's

hostility. Remember the bottle we have discovered up-stairs; and keep this desperate woman ignorant, and therefore harmless, as long as you can. There is my advice, Mr. Noel, in the fewest and plainest words. What do you say, sir? Am I almost as clever in my way, as your friend Mr. Bygrave? Can I, too, conspire a little, when the object of my conspiracy is to assist your wishes and to protect your friends?"

Permitted the use of his tongue at last, Noel Vanstone's admiration of Mrs. Lecount expressed itself in terms precisely similar to those which he had used on a former occasion, in paying his compliments to Captain Wragge. "What a head you have got!" were the grateful words he had once spoken to Mrs. Lecount's bitterest enemy. "What a head you have got!" were the grateful words which he now spoke again to Mrs. Lecount herself. So do extremes meet; and such is sometimes the all-embracing capacity of the approval of a fool!

"Allow my head, sir, to deserve the compliment which you have paid to it," said Mrs. Lecount. "The letter to the admiral is not written yet. Your will there, is a body without a soul—an Adam without an Eve—until the letter is completed, and laid by its side. A little more dictation on my part, a little more writing on yours—and our work is done. Pardon me. The letter will be longer than the will—we must have larger paper than the note-paper this time."

The writing-case was searched, and some letter-paper was found in it of the size required. Mrs. Lecount resumed her dictation; and Noel Vanstone resumed his pen.

"Baliol Cottage, Dumfries,
November 3rd, 1847.

"Private.

"Dear Admiral Bartram,—When you open my Will (in which you are named my sole executor), you will find that I have bequeathed the whole residue of my estate—after payment of one legacy of five thousand pounds—to yourself. It is the purpose of my letter to tell you privately what the object is for which I have left you the fortune which is now placed in your hands.

"I beg you to consider this large legacy, as intended, under certain conditions, to be given by you to your nephew George. If your nephew is married at the time of my death, and if his wife is living, I request you to put him at once in possession of your legacy; accompanying it by the expression of my desire (which I am sure he will consider a sacred and binding obligation on him) that he will settle the money on his wife, and on his children, if he has any. If, on the other hand, he is unmarried at the time of my death, or if he is a widower—in either of those cases, I make it a condition of his receiving the legacy, that he shall be married within the period of—"

Mrs. Lecount laid down the Draft letter from

which she had been dictating thus far, and informed Noel Vanstone by a sign that his pen might rest.

"We have come to the question of time, sir," she observed. "How long will you give your cousin to marry, if he is single, or a widower, at the time of your death?"

"Shall I give him a year?" inquired Noel Vanstone.

"If we had nothing to consider but the interests of Propriety," said Mrs. Lecount, "I should say a year too, sir—especially if Mr. George should happen to be a widower. But we have your wife to consider, as well as the interests of Propriety. A year of delay, between your death and your cousin's marriage, is a dangerously long time to leave the disposal of your fortune in suspense. Give a determined woman a year to plot and contrive in, and there is no saying what she may not do."

"Six months?" suggested Noel Vanstone.

"Six months, sir," rejoined Mrs. Lecount, "is the preferable time of the two. A six months' interval from the day of your death is enough for Mr. George.—You look discomposed, sir. What is the matter?"

"I wish you wouldn't talk so much about my death," he broke out petulantly. "I don't like it! I hate the very sound of the word!"

Mrs. Lecount smiled resignedly, and referred to her Draft.

"I see the word 'Decease' written here," she remarked. "Perhaps, Mr. Noel, you would prefer it?"

"Yes," he said; "I prefer 'Decease.' It doesn't sound so dreadful as 'Death.'"

"Let us go on with the letter, sir."

She resumed her dictation as follows:

"..... in either of those cases, I make it a condition of his receiving the legacy, that he shall be married within the period of Six calendar months from the day of my decease that the woman he marries shall *not* be a widow; and that his marriage shall be a marriage by Banns, publicly celebrated in the parish church of Ossory—where he has been known from his childhood, and where the family and circumstances of his future wife are likely to be the subject of public interest and inquiry."

"This," said Mrs. Lecount, quietly looking up from the Draft, "is to protect Mr. George, sir, in case the same trap is set for him, which was successfully set for you. She will not find her false character and her false name fit quite so easily, next time—no, not even with Mr. Bygrave to help her! Another dip of ink, Mr. Noel; let us write the next paragraph. Are you ready?"

"Yes."

Mrs. Lecount went on:

"If your nephew fails to comply with these conditions—that is to say, if, being either a bachelor or a widower at the time of my decease,

he fails to marry in all respects as I have here instructed him to marry, within Six calendar months from that time—it is my desire that he shall not receive the legacy, or any part of it. I request you, in the case here supposed, to pass him over altogether; and to give the fortune left you in my will, to his married sister, Mrs. Girdlestone.

“Having now put you in possession of my motives and intentions, I come to the next question which it is necessary to consider. If, when you open this letter, your nephew is an unmarried man, it is clearly indispensable that he should know of the conditions here imposed on him, as soon, if possible, as you know of them yourself. Are you, under these circumstances, freely to communicate to him what I have here written to you? Or, are you to leave him under the impression that no such private expression of my wishes as this is in existence; and are you to state all the conditions relating to his marriage, as if they emanated entirely from yourself?”

“If you will adopt this latter alternative, you will add one more to the many obligations under which your friendship has placed me.

“I have serious reason to believe that the possession of my money, and the discovery of any peculiar arrangements relating to the disposal of it, will be objects (after my decease) of the fraud and conspiracy of an unscrupulous person. I am therefore anxious—for your sake, in the first place—that no suspicion of the existence of this letter should be conveyed to the mind of the person to whom I allude. And I am equally desirous—for Mrs. Girdlestone’s sake, in the second place—that this same person should be entirely ignorant that the legacy will pass into Mrs. Girdlestone’s possession, if your nephew is not married in the given time. I know George’s easy, pliable disposition; I dread the attempts that will be made to practise on it; and I feel sure that the prudent course will be, to abstain from trusting him with secrets, the rash revelation of which might be followed by serious, and even dangerous results.

“State the conditions, therefore, to your nephew, as if they were your own. Let him think they have been suggested to your mind by the new responsibilities imposed on you as a man of property, by your position in my will, and by your consequent anxiety to provide for the perpetuation of the family name. If these reasons are not sufficient to satisfy him, there can be no objection to your referring him, for any further explanations which he may desire, to his wedding-day.

“I have done. My last wishes are now confided to you, in implicit reliance on your honour, and on your tender regard for the memory of your friend. Of the miserable circumstances which compel me to write as I have written here, I say nothing. You will hear of them, if my life is spared, from my own lips—for you will be the first friend whom I shall consult in my difficulty and distress. Keep this letter strictly secret,

and strictly in your own possession, until my requests are complied with. Let no human being but yourself know where it is, on any pretence whatever.

“Believe me, dear Admiral Bartram,

“Affectionately yours,

“NOEL VANSTONE.”

“Have you signed, sir?” asked Mrs. Lecount. “Let me look the letter over, if you please, before we seal it up.”

She read the letter carefully. In Noel Vanstone’s close, cramped handwriting, it filled two pages of letter paper, and ended at the top of the third page. Instead of using an envelope, Mrs. Lecount folded it, neatly and securely, in the old-fashioned way. She lit the taper in the inkstand, and returned the letter to the writer.

“Seal it, Mr. Noel,” she said, “with your own hand, and your own seal.” She extinguished the taper, and handed him the pen again. “Address the letter, sir,” she proceeded, “to *Admiral Bartram, St. Cruz-in-the-Marsh, Essex*. Now add these words, and sign them, above the address: *To be kept in your own possession, and to be opened by yourself only, on the day of my death—or ‘Decease,’ if you prefer it—Noel Vanstone*. Have you done? Let me look at it again. Quite right, in every particular. Accept my congratulations, sir. If your wife has not plotted her last plot for the Combe-Raven money, it is not your fault, Mr. Noel—and not mine!”

Finding his attention released by the completion of the letter, Noel Vanstone reverted at once to purely personal considerations. “There is my packing-up to be thought of now,” he said. “I can’t go away without my warm things.”

“Excuse me, sir,” rejoined Mrs. Lecount, “there is the Will to be signed first; and there must be two persons found to witness your signature.” She looked out of the front window, and saw the carriage waiting at the door. “The coachman will do for one of the witnesses,” she said. “He is in respectable service at Dumfries, and he can be found if he happens to be wanted. We must have one of your own servants, I suppose, for the other witness. They are all detestable women; but the cook is the least ill-looking of the three. Send for the cook, sir, while I go out and call the coachman. When we have got our witnesses here, you have only to speak to them in these words:—‘I have a document here to sign, and I wish you to write your names on it, as witnesses of my signature.’ Nothing more, Mr. Noel! Say those few words, in your usual manner—and, when the signing is over, I will see myself to your packing-up, and your warm things.”

She went to the front door, and summoned the coachman to the parlour. On her return she found the cook already in the room. The cook looked mysteriously offended, and stared without intermission at Mrs. Lecount. In a minute more, the coachman—an elderly man—came in. He was preceded by a relishing odour of whisky—

but his head was Scotch; and nothing but his odour betrayed him.

"I have a document here to sign," said Noel Vanstone, repeating his lesson; "and I wish you to write your names on it, as witnesses of my signature."

The coachman looked at the will. The cook never removed her eyes from Mrs. Lecount.

"Ye'll no object, sir," said the coachman, with the national caution showing itself in every wrinkle on his face—"ye'll no object, sir, to tell me, first, what the Document may be?"

Mrs. Lecount interposed before Noel Vanstone's indignation could express itself in words.

"You must tell the man, sir, that this is your Will," she said. "When he witnesses your signature, he can see as much for himself, if he looks at the top of the page."

"Ay, ay," said the coachman, looking at the top of the page immediately. "His last Will and Testament. Hech, sirs! there's a sair confronting of Death, in a Document like yon! A' flesh is grass," continued the coachman, exhaling an additional puff of whisky, and looking up devoutly at the ceiling. "Tak' those words, in connexion with that other Screepure:—Many are ca'ad but few are chosen. Tak' that again, in connexion with Rev'lations, Chapter the First; verses, One to Fefteen. Lay the whole to heart—and what's your Walth, then? Dross, sirs! And your body? (Screepure again.) Clay for the potter! And your life? (Screepure once more.) The Breeth o' your Nostils!"

The cook listened as if the cook was at church—but she never removed her eyes from Mrs. Lecount.

"You had better sign, sir. This is apparently some custom prevalent in Dumfries during the transaction of business," said Mrs. Lecount, resignedly. "The man means well, I dare say."

She added those last words in a soothing tone, for she saw that Noel Vanstone's indignation was fast merging into alarm. The coachman's outburst of exhortation seemed to have inspired him with fear, as well as disgust.

He dipped the pen in the ink, and signed the Will without uttering a word. The coachman (descending instantly from Theology to Business) watched the signature with the most scrupulous attention; and signed his own name as witness, with an implied commentary on the proceeding, in the form of another puff of whisky, exhaled through the medium of a heavy sigh. The cook looked away from Mrs. Lecount with an effort—signed her name in a violent hurry—and looked back again with a start, as if she expected to see a loaded pistol (produced in the interval) in the housekeeper's hands. "Thank you!" said Mrs. Lecount, in her friendliest manner. The cook shut up her lips aggressively, and looked at her master. "You may go!" said her master. The cook coughed contemptuously—and went.

"We shan't keep you long," said Mrs. Lecount, dismissing the coachman. "In half an

hour, or less, we shall be ready for the journey back."

The coachman's austere countenance relaxed for the first time. He smiled mysteriously, and approached Mrs. Lecount on tiptoe.

"Ye'll no forget one thing, my leddy," he said, with the most ingratiating politeness. "Ye'll no forget the witnessing, as weel as the driving, when ye pay me for my day's wark!" He laughed with guttural gravity; and, leaving his atmosphere behind him, stalked out of the room.

"Lecount," said Noel Vanstone, as soon as the coachman closed the door. "Did I hear you tell that man we should be ready in half an hour?"

"Yes, sir?"

"Are you blind?"

He asked the question with an angry stamp of his foot. Mrs. Lecount looked at him in astonishment.

"Can't you see the brute is drunk?" he went on, more and more irritably. "Is my life nothing? Am I to be left at the mercy of a drunken coachman? I won't trust that man to drive me for any consideration under heaven! I'm surprised you could think of it, Lecount."

"The man has been drinking, sir," said Mrs. Lecount. "It is easy to see, and to smell, that. But he is evidently used to drinking. If he is sober enough to walk quite straight—which he certainly does—and to sign his name in an excellent handwriting—which you may see for yourself on the Will—I venture to think he is sober enough to drive us to Dumfries."

"Nothing of the sort! You're a foreigner, Lecount; you don't understand these people. They drink whisky from morning to night. Whisky is the strongest spirit that's made; whisky is notorious for its effect on the brain. I tell you, I won't run the risk. I never was driven, and I never will be driven, by anybody but a sober man."

"Must I go back to Dumfries by myself, sir?"

"And leave me here? Leave me alone in this house after what has happened? How do I know my wife may not come back to-night? How do I know her journey is not a blind to mislead me? Have you no feeling, Lecount? Can you leave me, in my miserable situation—?" He sank into a chair and burst out crying over his own idea, before he had completed the expression of it in words. "Too bad!" he said, with his handkerchief over his face—"too bad!"

It was impossible not to pity him. If ever mortal was pitiable, he was the man. He had broken down at last, under the conflict of violent emotions which had been roused in him, since the morning. The effort to follow Mrs. Lecount along the mazes of intricate combination through which she had steadily led the way, had upheld him while that effort lasted: the moment it was at an end, he dropped. The coachman had hastened a result—of which the coachman was far from being the cause.

"You surprise me, you distress me, sir," said Mrs. Lecount. "I entreat you to compose yourself. I will stay here, if you wish it, with pleasure—I will stay here to-night, for your sake. You want rest and quiet, after this dreadful day. The coachman shall be instantly sent away, Mr. Noel. I will give him a note to the landlord of the hotel—and the carriage shall come back for us to-morrow morning, with another man to drive it."

The prospect which those words presented cheered him. He wiped his eyes, and kissed Mrs. Lecount's hand.

"Yes!" he said, faintly; "send the coachman away—and you stop here. You good creature! You excellent Lecount! Send the drunken brute away, and come back directly. We will be comfortable by the fire, Lecount—and have a nice little dinner—and try to make it like old times." His weak voice faltered; he returned to the fire-side, and melted into tears again under the pathetic influence of his own idea.

Mrs. Lecount left him for a minute to dismiss the coachman. When she returned to the parlour, she found him with his hand on the bell.

"What do you want, sir?" she asked.

"I want to tell the servants to get your room ready," he answered. "I wish to show you every attention, Lecount."

"You are all kindness, Mr. Noel—but wait one moment. It may be well to have these papers put out of the way, before the servant comes in again. If you will place the Will and the Sealed Letter together in one envelope—and if you will direct it to the admiral—I will take care that the enclosure so addressed is safely placed in his own hands. Will you come to the table, Mr. Noel, only for one moment more?"

No! He was obstinate; he refused to move from the fire; he was sick and tired of writing; he wished he had never been born, and he loathed the sight of pen and ink. All Mrs. Lecount's patience, and all Mrs. Lecount's persuasion, were required to induce him to write the admiral's address for the second time. She only succeeded by bringing the blank envelope to him upon the paper-case, and putting it coaxingly on his lap. He grumbled, he even swore, but he directed the envelope at last, in these terms: "To Admiral Bartram, St. Crux-in-the-Marsh. Favoured by Mrs. Lecount." With that final act of compliance, his docility came to an end. He refused, in the fiercest terms, to seal the envelope.

There was no need to press this proceeding on him. His seal lay ready on the table; and it mattered nothing whether he used it, or whether a person in his confidence used it for him. Mrs. Lecount sealed the envelope, with its two important enclosures placed safely inside.

She opened her travelling-bag for the last time, and pausing for a moment before she put the sealed packet away, looked at it with a triumph too deep for words. She smiled, as she dropped it into the bag. Not the shadow of a suspicion that the Will might contain superfluous phrases

and expressions which no practical lawyer would have used; not the vestige of a doubt whether the Letter was quite as complete a document as a practical lawyer might have made it, troubled her mind. In blind reliance—born of her hatred for Magdalen and her hunger for revenge—in blind reliance on her own abilities, and on her friend's law, she trusted the future implicitly to the promise of the morning's work.

As she locked her travelling-bag, Noel Vanstone rang the bell. On this occasion, the summons was answered by Louisa.

"Get the spare room ready," said her master; "this lady will sleep here to-night. And air my warm things; this lady and I are going away to-morrow morning."

The civil and submissive Louisa received her orders in sullen silence—darted an angry look at her master's impenetrable guest—and left the room. The servants were evidently all attached to their mistress's interests, and were all of one opinion on the subject of Mrs. Lecount.

"That's done!" said Noel Vanstone, with a sigh of infinite relief. "Come and sit down, Lecount. Let's be comfortable—let's gossip over the fire."

Mrs. Lecount accepted the invitation; and drew an easy-chair to his side. He took her hand with a confidential tenderness, and held it in his, while the talk went on. A stranger, looking in through the window, would have taken them for mother and son; and would have thought to himself, "What a happy home!"

The gossip, led by Noel Vanstone, consisted, as usual, of an endless string of questions, and was devoted entirely to the subject of himself and his future prospects. Where would Lecount take him to, when they went away the next morning? Why to London? Why should he be left in London, while Lecount went on to St. Crux to give the admiral the Letter and the Will? Because his wife might follow him, if he went to the admiral's? Well, there was something in that. And because he ought to be safely concealed from her, in some comfortable lodging, near Mr. Loscombe? Why near Mr. Loscombe? Ah, yes, to be sure—to know what the law would do to help him. Would the law set him free from the Wretch who had deceived him? How tiresome of Lecount not to know! Would the law say he had gone and married himself a second time, because he had been living with the Wretch, like husband and wife, in Scotland? Anything that publicly assumed to be a marriage, *was* a marriage (he had heard) in Scotland? How excessively tiresome of Lecount to sit there, and say she knew nothing about it! Was he to stay long in London, by himself, with nobody but Mr. Loscombe to speak to? Would Lecount come back to him, as soon as she had put those important papers in the admiral's own hands? Would Lecount consider herself still in his service? The good Lecount! the excellent Lecount! And, after all the law-business was over—what then? Why not leave this horrid England, and

go abroad again? Why not go to France, to some cheap place, near Paris? Say Versailles? say St. Germain? In a nice little French house—cheap? With a nice French *bonne* to cook—who wouldn't waste his substance in the grease-pot? With a nice little garden—where he could work himself, and get health, and save the expense of keeping a gardener? It wasn't a bad idea? And it seemed to promise well for the future—didn't it, Lecount?

So he ran on—the poor, weak creature! the abject, miserable little man!

As the darkness gathered, at the close of the short November day, he began to grow drowsy—his ceaseless questions came to an end at last—he fell asleep. The wind outside sang its mournful winter-song; the tramp of passing footsteps, the roll of passing wheels on the road, ceased in dreary silence. He slept on quietly. The firelight rose and fell on his wizen little face, and his nerveless drooping hands. Mrs. Lecount had not pitied him yet. She began to pity him, now. Her point was gained; her interest in his will was secured; he had put his future life, of his own accord, under her fostering care—the fire was comfortable; the circumstances were favourable to the growth of Christian feeling. "Poor wretch!" said Mrs. Lecount, looking at him with a grave compassion—"Poor wretch!"

The dinner-hour roused him. He was cheerful at dinner; he reverted to the idea of the cheap little house in France; he smirked and simpered; and talked French to Mrs. Lecount, while the housemaid and Louisa waited, turn and turn about, under protest. When dinner was over, he returned to his comfortable chair before the fire, and Mrs. Lecount followed him. He resumed the conversation—which meant, in his case, repeating his questions. But he was not so quick and ready with them, as he had been earlier in the day. They began to flag—they continued, at longer and longer intervals—they ceased altogether. Towards nine o'clock he fell asleep again.

It was not a quiet sleep this time. He muttered, and ground his teeth, and rolled his head from side to side of the chair. Mrs. Lecount purposely made noise enough to rouse him. He woke with a vacant eye, and a flushed cheek. He walked about the room restlessly, with a new idea in his mind—the idea of writing a terrible letter; a letter of eternal farewell to his wife. How was it to be written? In what language should he express his feelings? The powers of Shakespeare himself would be unequal to the emergency! He had been the victim of an outrage entirely without parallel. A wretch had crept into his bosom! A viper had hidden herself at his fireside! Where could words be found to brand her with the infamy she deserved? He stopped, with a suffocating sense in him of his own impotent rage—he stopped, and shook his fist tremulously in the empty air.

Mrs. Lecount interfered with an energy and a resolution inspired by serious alarm. After the

heavy strain that had been laid on his weakness already, such an outbreak of passionate agitation as was now bursting from him, might be the destruction of his rest that night, and of his strength to travel the next day. With infinite difficulty, with endless promises to return to the subject, and to advise him about it in the morning, she prevailed on him, at last, to go up-stairs and compose himself for the night. She gave him her arm to assist him. On the way up-stairs, his attention, to her great relief, became suddenly absorbed by a new fancy. He remembered a certain warm and comforting mixture of wine, egg, sugar, and spices, which she had often been accustomed to make for him, in former times; and which he thought he should relish exceedingly, before he went to bed. Mrs. Lecount helped him on with his dressing-gown—then went down stairs again, to make his warm drink for him at the parlour fire.

She rang the bell, and ordered the necessary ingredients for the mixture, in Noel Vanstone's name. The servants, with the small ingenious malice of their race, brought up the materials, one by one, and kept her waiting for each of them as long as possible. She had got the saucepan, and the spoon, and the tumbler, and the nutmeg-grater, and the wine—but not the egg, the sugar, or the spices—when she heard him above, walking backwards and forwards noisily in his room; exciting himself on the old subject again, beyond all doubt.

She went up-stairs once more; but he was too quick for her—he heard her outside the door; and when she opened it, she found him in his chair, with his back cunningly turned towards her. Knowing him too well, to attempt any remonstrance, she merely announced the speedy arrival of the warm drink, and turned to leave the room. On her way out, she noticed a table in a corner, with an inkstand and a paper-case on it, and tried, without attracting his attention, to take the writing materials away. He was too quick for her again. He asked angrily, if she doubted his promise. She put the writing materials back on the table, for fear of offending him, and left the room.

In half an hour more, the mixture was ready. She carried it up to him, foaming and fragrant, in a large tumbler. "He will sleep after this," she thought to herself, as she opened the door; "I have made it stronger than usual, on purpose."

He had changed his place. He was sitting at the table in the corner—still with his back to her—writing. This time, his quick ears had not served him. This time, she had caught him in the fact.

"Oh, Mr. Noel! Mr. Noel!" she said, reproachfully, "what is your promise worth?"

He made no answer. He was sitting with his left elbow on the table, and with his head resting on his left hand. His right hand lay back on the paper, with the pen lying loose in it. "Your drink, Mr. Noel," she said in a kinder tone,

feeling unwilling to offend him. He took no notice of her.

She went to the table, to rouse him. Was he deep in thought?

He was dead.

THE END OF THE FIFTH SCENE.

WHAT WILL OUR GRANDSONS EAT?

WHAT will our grandsons eat? Divers things, doubtless, not eaten by us, as we also have enlarged and improved upon the diet of our grandfathers. Englishmen a generation or two hence may, for example, eat eland and yam, as commonly as beef and greens. When the first dinner of the British Acclimatisation Society was lately held at Willis's rooms, one hundred diners were assembled, and divers speculative eatables were introduced. There being only one quart of birds'-nest soup, the stewards were enabled to give a taste, and a taste only, to every member of the company; but the gelatinous quality thereof was pronounced excellent. The supply of Japanese trepang or sea-slug was not more abundant, and had but a sluggish reception. The kangaroo ham was too salt and tough. We must, therefore, console ourselves, and dispense with these rarities in our English cuisine. But, after all, the society cares little for mere curiosities. Leaving to zoological gardens the exhibition of rare animals, and to hot-houses the rearing of rare plants, its ambition is to bring to England animals and vegetables which can be naturalised and made to contribute to our wants. We have discussed this heretofore.* It has already introduced the prairie grouse from North America, a new variety of turkey from Honduras, and the excellent Chinese sheep that breed twice a year. It has introduced the Chinese yam, highly applauded at the dinner, very much like good mashed potatoes, and this is a plant which has taken so kindly to our English earth, that it is not easy, when it has once struck, to remove its roots. It has succeeded in bringing to this country the Bombyx Cynthia silk worms, which were found to thrive on the allanthus, a plant flourishing almost everywhere, and of which a specimen may be seen any day in St. James's-square. Lord Bacon early declared that heat and cold were the hands of nature. The hands clasp in England. A visitor to our Zoological Gardens is struck by the singular capacity with which groups of beings individually natives of climates different from each other, and in some respects essentially dissimilar to our own, become reconciled to alternations of temperature. We have now the bird of paradise of Central America breathing the same atmosphere as the ostrich of Central Africa, the Polar bear existing under the same sun as the tiger of Bengal, and the bower bird of Australia a near neighbour to the bearded vulture of Algiers. Acclimatisation, though not undertaken systematically, is, of course, but an old custom of civilisation. The turkey, a bird in which our interest now

deepens as Christmas is seen growing on us from afar, was introduced into Europe by the Spaniards, from the high regions of Mexico, after the subjugation of that territory. It was said by Benjamin Franklin, that the wild turkey, which is truly a national bird, indigenous to the soil, and not found beyond the limits of the continent, ought, after the example of the Gallic cock, to have been the national emblem of Northern America. The traveller who has seen the wild cock of the wilderness gleaming with bright and golden plumage, tinted with the varieties of blue, violet, and green, broken by the deep black bands and metallic lustre of the feathers, looks with disdain upon the conceited gobbler of our homesteads. The wild cocks are the sentinels of the forest:

On the top

Of yon mangolia, the loud turkey's voice
Is heralding the dawn, from tree to tree
Extends the wakening watch note, far and wide,
Till the whole woodlands echo in the cry.

A bird so capable of European naturalisation soon found its way into England, and although the wild beauty of the bird is gone, we have reason to be content with a native born and reared in Norfolk, as an example of what acclimatisation can effect.

The peacock was a bird of India, originally brought to Macedon by the soldiers of Alexander the Great, and afterwards distributed in the course of their conquests by the Romans. The pheasant, also of Eastern origin, and originally restricted to the Asiatic continent, was first brought from Asia Minor, but its hardy constitution has fitted it for almost every country. The earliest mention of the bird in England is in the reign of our first Edward, but it has become a settled denizen of our woods, and a general delicacy on our tables. The partridge is said by some to have originally been a visitor from Egypt and the Barbary coast, but the red-legged bird is a modern introduction from France, and to the regret of many has become only too plentiful in some preserves, and too completely acclimatised. It persecutes our native breed, which is better both for the sportsman and the table, while by its determined running it does what it can to spoil the best-trained pointer. The guinea-fowl, as its name announces, is a native of the Guinea coast, but its noisy presence in our farm-yards, and its introduction at certain seasons at our entertainments, show how completely it has made itself at home. Even the favourite cage-songster of our homes—the canary-finch—did not visit England until the sixteenth century, and its first introduction into Europe was remarkable. A vessel, with a few of the birds on board, was wrecked on the Italian coast, opposite the island of Elba, where some of them having escaped found a refuge, and the climate proving favourable, their number increased. From that parent stock it is believed that all our domesticated warblers have sprung, and they have been long considered members of our families. But to go back to eatables, let venison bear witness to

* See "Acclimatisation," page 492, volume v.

the good things that may come of acclimatisation. Although the red deer are indigenous in our forests, and were once numerous, they have long ceased to be valued amongst the requirements of modern luxury. The beautiful fallow deer, the type of the palmated or platycene group, the denizen of our parks, was brought to England from the South of Europe, into which it is believed to have been originally introduced from Western Africa, and in these warmer climates it attains a larger size than with us in its semi-domesticated state.

Fish, too, has been acclimatised, and although neither the exact period when, nor the particular country whence, the carp was first brought to England very distinctly appears, they are mentioned as dainties in 1496, and in the privy purse expenses of Henry the Eighth, in 1532, we find entries of rewards to persons for "bringing carps to the king." Experiments so early and so successful, in which the several quarters of the globe have been contributory to our enjoyments in fish, flesh, and fowl, encourage us to hope that, with vastly increased opportunities, and direct attention to the subject, we may, by judicious selection, obtain other aids comforts and luxuries, hereafter to be prized.

The horse is supposed to have been indigenous in almost every country, yet in no animal are the effects of acclimatisation more striking than in the horses of an English racing stud. When Cæsar landed on the coast of Kent, he was heroically received by the mounted warriors and war-chariots of the ancient Britons, but it is believed that the Romans imported a valuable breed into England. The chroniclers tell us that our Anglo-Saxon sovereigns brought from Germany, horses formed both for endurance and for speed, while the Normans were proud of the noble chargers, often of Spanish origin, that bore them and their weighty armour. Richard Cœur de Lion failed in an attempt to bring to England two steeds of Eastern birth, which, during the Crusades, he had bought at Cyprus; and his worthless brother John had recourse to Flanders for their heavy breed. The marriage of an English queen with a Spanish prince, enabled the nobility in the reign of Mary to procure some fine Andalusian horses. The barb, or steed of the desert, has been in all ages celebrated for its speed, its endurance, and its beauty, and we can trace back Eastern blood to the reign of James the First. The celebrated Darley Arabian, bred in the deserts of Palmyra, became, in the days of Anne, the progenitor of our renowned racing stock, and was the founder of the Eclipse family. The Godolphin Arabian, purchased from under a cart in Paris, afterwards contributed to the celebrity of the English racing stud, traceable from son to sire to Arabian or barb ancestry. While the English blood-horse is superior in symmetry, strength, and speed to every other animal of the race on earth, the changes in colour and condition, which excite our admiration during the warmth of the summer months, betray, like other children of the sun, his Eastern origin. The wealthy brewers and

distillers pride themselves on displaying the splendid horses under their drays, exceeding all others in stature, power, and massiveness. These magnificent animals are unquestionably not indigenous, the large heavy horses of Flanders and of Normandy having been acclimatised for their production.

For fruits and vegetables we are still more indebted to the introduction of good things out of other lands. The vine followed the Greeks, the wheat the Romans, the cotton the Arabs, and the potato the English. The Romans brought the cabbage in the train of their conquests, and although the wild apple is a native of England, it is believed that we also owe to the Romans the cultivated fruit. The cherry was brought to Italy by the Roman general Lucullus, 73 A.C., from the Asiatic town Cerasus, in Pontus, from which the name is derived, and we obtained that favourite fruit from our invaders. Lydgate, the monk, who in his poem *London Lickpenny*, describes his passing through London in 1415, tells us that he heard them "cry straberies ripe and cherries on the ryse;" that is, cherries on twigs, a fashion not yet out of date. The peach came direct from Persia to Rome, in the reign of Claudius, but was unknown in England until about the middle of the sixteenth century; and the apricot, a native of the East, was procured from Italy by Wolfe, a French priest, who was gardener to Henry the Eighth. Hops were first brought from the Netherlands in 1524, and the City of London early petitioned parliament against their use, on the ground that "they would spoil the taste of drink and endanger the people." Although forbidden by an act of James the First, our ales have acquired the appellation of the wines of England. The bean came originally from the East, but was probably cultivated in England by the Romans; the kidney bean is a native of India, and was first grown in this country in the reign of Elizabeth. The pea is a native of Southern Europe, and although early reared in England, Fuller tells us that in Elizabeth's reign green peas were brought from Holland, and were "fit dainties for ladies, they came so far and cost so dear." The onion is supposed to have been a native of Spain, the leek of Switzerland, and the eschalot of Palestine, found originally, as its name imports, near Ascalon. The radish and the endive are natives of China; parsley is from Sardinia, the artichoke from Southern Europe, brocoli from Cyprus, the walnut from Persia. These were all introduced in the reign of Elizabeth, and the red beet is first mentioned in the days of the Commonwealth. To the adventurous spirit of enterprise which distinguished the Elizabethan age, we also owe the potato, which was imported from Virginia by Raleigh, when a favourite of his royal mistress, on his return from that colony. An ancient ballad records its arrival:

The famed Walter Raleigh, Queen Bess's own knight,
Brought here from Virginia the root of delight.

Crabbe, in his homely but nervous rhymes,

describes potatoes as "those round balls of farinaceous food," but they were destined in after days to acquire, at least for a time in Ireland, the appellation of the "root of all evil." The spot near Youghal, where they were first planted in these islands, on the estate which Sir Walter had acquired by the forfeiture of the Earl of Desmond, one of the Geraldines, is still pointed out to the stranger, and tradition declares that the early knowledge of their value came by accident. Sir Walter having directed his gardener to gather some of the plants for his table, the valueless seed-apples which had been produced from the blossoms were accordingly presented to Raleigh, who, on tasting the supposed sample of fine American fruit, immediately commanded the gardener to dig out and throw the worthless weeds away. In this operation the roots were subsequently found in high perfection, and the discovery must have attracted notice, for we find potatoes mentioned twice in Shakespeare. Falstaff in the Merry Wives of Windsor, exclaims: "Let the sky rain potatoes!" and in Troilus and Cressida, Thersites in the Grecian camp before Troy—certainly a strange anachronism—complains of the devil luxury, with "his potato finger." Asparagus probably was brought from Western Europe, for many of the steppes of Southern Russia are covered with the wild plant, which is there eaten as grass by horses and cattle. Lettuce and celery, also acclimatised vegetables, are in their present state of perfection striking examples of the influence of culture: while the pine-apple and the melon, productions of the tropics, are by the artificial aid of glass so reared in England as to become more delicious than they are in their own lands. The Jerusalem artichoke is a native of Brazil, but the plant having the habit of the sunflower, the name is a strange corruption of *Girasol*, from the Italian words "*girare*," to turn, and "*sol*," the sun, to turn to the sun, and the blunder is well clinched in modern cookery, when out of Jerusalem artichokes is made Palestine soup.

So much for what we have received. For what we are going to receive let us now show ourselves thankful. The eland antelope is the finest specimen of the deer kind which the land of antelopes, Southern Africa, has as yet supplied. But the eland is no longer exclusively African. The travelled sportsmen who had revelled amidst the wild herds of Caffraria were loud in praising the venison, and the trials we have as yet had of the haunches justify report. Sir Cornwall Harris, in delight, assures us that "the venison fairly melts in the mouth, and as for the brisket, it is absolutely a cut for a monarch." The eland has been already successfully acclimatised in our parks, and its imposing size—for it frequently attains the height of nineteen hands, and weight of from fifteen hundred to two thousand pounds—makes it an object of real economic interest. It has proved itself capable of enduring all the vicissitudes of our climate, breeds freely in confinement, and requires little more care than is usually bestowed

on valuable cattle. This noble animal promises to become a permanent inhabitant, and while some day delightful epicures by the splendour of its cheap venison—

The haunch is a picture for painters to study,
The fat is so white, and the lean is so ruddy—

may by its strength and speed, if the agricultural machines do not make an end of the use of animal strength as a moving power, come into harness on our farms. The Impeyan pheasant of the Himalaya, perhaps, from its size and the richness of its plumage, the most splendid of all birds, has proved itself by endurance of confinement, and by breeding in this country under that disadvantage, able to bear the rigours of our winters and adapt itself as a mountain-bird to the northern forests of our island. The black-necked swan of Chili has recently produced in England young and healthy cygnets, and these noble birds, brilliant in the contrast of velvet black and snowy-white with coral bills, are destined to add graceful and interesting ornaments to our rivers and our lakes. The mandarin duck, so highly prized in China that it was with extreme difficulty that a few pairs could be procured for England, will soon be a natural member of our poultry-yards. There are no true partridges in America, but their absence is amply supplied by a numerous family of which the Californian colin is the most prized, and, as it breeds freely in England, we anticipate that we shall yet see it established as one of our favourite game birds.

Our own Australian dependencies have already transmitted to us new and remarkable varieties: the black swan, considered by the Romans an impossibility, has been long naturalised, and we have lately received a fine bird, between a swan and a goose, known as the white swan goose, which thrives in confinement. The satin bower birds of Australia have been successfully acclimatised, and may be seen at the Regent's Park weaving with consummate decorative skill from twigs, feathers, shells, and other simple materials, their arbour-like galleries and over-arched avenues, through which they pursue each other. Professor Owen, in a recent publication, observes that the female, like our magpie, builds the nest in the concealment of a tree, and suggests that the propensity of our native pilferer to carry off glittering objects may be the remnant of a similar bower-building and ornamental instinct, although in the case of our magpie circumstances have restrained to necessities the indulgence of its taste. The brush turkey of Australia, or, as the colonists term this extraordinary bird, the talegalla, has been naturalised in our Zoological Gardens, and is an object of extreme curiosity, from the singular manner in which the reproduction of its family is effected by mound-raising. The birds raise a mound of earth, leaves, grass, and other vegetable materials, capable, by fermentation, of creating and retaining heat. In this the eggs are deposited, and, being buried carefully, are watched by the birds until the youngsters, fully matured,

issue forth, strong and feathered, so as to be capable of flight on the third day after their birth. The male bird is the principal director of this singular process of incubation. He heaps the mound together by a scraping motion of his powerful feet, and as soon as it has been raised to the height of about four feet, both birds contrive to reduce it to an even surface, then scoop a hollow in the middle, and in due time the eggs are arranged, about fifteen inches deep, in a circle at regular intervals, with the smaller end of the egg downwards. The male bird also watches the temperature of this natural oven. A hole is left to admit air to the eggs, and on hot days they are nearly uncovered two or three times between morning and evening. In about a month all this care is rewarded. After breaking the egg, the young bird makes no effort to come out, until the second day—and even then, in the afternoon, instead of seeking shelter under the wings of its mother, it returns to its first home, and is carefully covered up by the assiduous parents, but at a less depth than the original circle of eggs. On the third day, the nestling, which may be said to spring from mother earth, is capable of flight. This fowl, the turkey of Australia, is a shy bird, roosting in trees. The average weight of the egg, the shell of which is very thin, is about eight ounces; the weight of the male bird is about four pounds and a half, and the flesh is said to be very delicate, tender, and juicy. We may all heartily wish, for our own sakes, great success to the English Acclimatisation Society. Animated by something of its own spirit, a single English nobleman, the late Earl of Derby, once indulged in the costly luxury of sustaining at his seat at Knowsley, at his own expense, no less than fifteen hundred animals. Public co-operation can do, in a matter of this kind, more, and at far less cost, than the most enlightened private generosity, working alone. With the advantage her vast territories afford, it would be a reproach to Great Britain were we to permit ourselves to be surpassed by the efforts of the rival Société d'Acclimatation at their new and splendid gardens in the Bois de Boulogne at Paris.

At any rate we have one colony determined that if the mother country be too well content with her natural and acquired wealth, she, with a broad new region to stock as well as people, will apply in the directest manner science and system to the achievement of that which has been in the old country hitherto the work of time, and taste, and chance. France herself is rivalled by Australia in energy of regard for the work of acclimatisation.

In the month of February, 1861, Mr. Edward Wilson (a man well known as an indefatigable, untiring worker) announced a meeting of gentlemen in Melbourne to consider the propriety of establishing a society in Victoria. They met at the Mechanics' Institution, and the result was that a provisional committee was named, which, as the society grew, changed into a permanent council, with the governor, Sir Henry Barkly, as patron, Mr. Edward Wilson as president, Dr.

Mueller the far-famed botanist as vice-president, while the duties of hon. treasurer were kindly undertaken by Mr. T. J. Sumner (of Greig, Sumner, and Co.), and those of hon. secretary by Mr. W. H. Archer, the registrar-general. The council consisted of fourteen other members, warm friends of the cause. A secretary and collector were appointed, and this society was fairly set a-going.

Not content to rest here, in August, 1861, Mr. Wilson visited Sydney, and while there inaugurated the Acclimatisation Society of New South Wales, which society is also now in a flourishing condition. Again, in January, 1862, Mr. Wilson paid a visit to Hobart Town, and succeeded in establishing an Acclimatisation Society of Tasmania, while one has spontaneously sprung into existence at Auckland, under the name of the Acclimatisation Society of New Zealand. Now for some of the results. With the exception of the Victorian one, all these societies are yet too young for us to predict with any certainty as to their chances of success, and even with this one the experiments are nearly all in their infancy; still, something has been done. All the Australian colonies are great sufferers from the want of soft-billed birds to destroy the teeming insect life which is nourished in the crops, often to their entire destruction; therefore the society set about introducing, and has succeeded in introducing in sufficient numbers as to make their permanent establishment only a question of time, the thrush, blackbird, skylark, linnnet, starling, goldfinch, and chaffinch. Unfortunately, the sparrow, the most useful of the whole (which we in England are wickedly destroying only bitterly to repent it at some future day), perished on the voyage, but, nothing discouraged, the society mean to try again. Among larger birds, the gold and silver pheasant, the English pheasant and partridge, and the Californian quail, have not only been introduced, but have bred freely: while the curassow, that magnificent South American bird, seems likely to become permanently added to the Australian poultry-yard. In mammalia, the acclimatisation of the camel, the Alpine, and the fallow deer, is proceeding rapidly, and we see by the columns of the *Yeoman* (a weekly paper intimately connected with the Victorian Society) that the colonial secretary of Natal has offered to forward to Victoria, elands, hartebeests, buffaloes, and ostriches, in exchange for some of the alpacas. The greatest difficulty in the way, is the want of direct communication between Australia and Natal. At present the animals would have to be transhipped at the Mauritius, and possibly have to wait there for weeks for a favourable opportunity of being forwarded. The tediousness of this route is very fatal; as a proof of which, we may mention that out of seven ostriches shipped from the Cape, only one reached Melbourne alive. Should this difficulty be surmounted, and a herd of elands be landed in Australia, we have no doubt, from the fineness of the climate, they would as readily live and in-

crease as in their native country. In addition to this, her Majesty has presented the society with some roebucks, and these are, we believe, on their way to their new homes.

In fish, of course the great desire is to get possession of the salmon, but hitherto every effort has failed; though, while we write, a further attempt, at an expense of over two thousand pounds, is being made—such expense being defrayed by money specially voted for the purpose by the Tasmanian and Victorian parliaments. Dace, roach, carp, tench, and gold and silver fish, do exist, and are increasing; but at present it is too soon to say with what rapidity.

The government of Victoria have made over to the Acclimatisation Society, for their use, the Royal Park—a fine piece of timbered grass land lying on the north side of Melbourne—and the work of fencing and providing accommodation for the animals and birds is making rapid progress.

In exchange for what Australia is trying to introduce from other countries, hardly a ship leaves her shores but takes some native animals to foreign countries; and although the idea may seem absurd to an Englishman of ever really establishing in Europe such an animal as the kangaroo or the wallaby, yet any one who has tasted kangaroo tail soup, or dined off a slice of roasted haunch, or stayed his hunger with a steak—we are admonished to say nothing for the salted ham—would look forward to such a chance with pleasure.

When we look at the broad lands of Australia, well grassed and well watered, and think of the comparatively little animal life is indigenous to the soil, we cannot but feel that the Acclimatisation Societies of the Antipodes have a noble work before them—a work of which we may not see the fruits, but which shall, if it succeed, make Australia a far happier and greater land than she is now. And so we heartily wish the Australians and their Society, together with ourselves, God speed!

ALEXANDRIA OLD AND NEW.

At Alexandria, very near the house in which I passed a winter, lived a French physician, an agreeable and very intelligent man, who held an important post in the Institut Egyptien. Learned also in antiquities was Dr. S., and most evenings, when his day's work was done, might his pale clever face, and his French curly-brimmed hat, surmounting his huge white massive-headed donkey, be seen crossing the patch of desert between the city and the remains of ancient Alexandria, Greek and Roman, that border the coast in the direction of Ramleh.

Very precious relics had he collected in his solitary excursions, especially as the Arab fellahs employed in excavations knew where to apply for a certain purchaser of whatever objects of value or curiosity they might find, and they generally gave him the choice and the refusal of their discoveries.

He had also a large collection of antique skulls, taken from the vast necropolis, which forms an important portion of the Greek remains of the great city—skulls in a more or less perfect condition, but, in most cases, bearing the pure Caucasian stamp, often in its highest development.

I had long been anxious to visit at leisure this supereminently classic ground, over which a ride on horseback had already greatly stimulated my interest and curiosity, and knowing how admirable a cicerone would be found in Dr. S., I made interest with him to take me there.

Some others of our friends agreed to join the party, and one fine afternoon we started, a cavalcade of six on donkeys, headed by the doctor on his milk-white asinine charger, and attended by two or three Arab donkey-boys, prodding the beasts behind to keep them at the shuffling trot which is their usual pace.

Soon we were out of the city, and striking across the desert sands towards our destination. The weather was delicious, neither hot nor cold; the sea-breeze swept athwart the broad open space, bringing a sense of refreshing and invigoration delightful to feel. We were all in gay spirits, and the small incidents and accidents of the route, inseparable from the conduct of a troop of donkeys, for the most part carrying riders not much accustomed to such a mode of locomotion, only formed fresh food for "jest and youthful jollity."

My donkey, borrowed from an acquaintance, and no vulgar street-donkey, was a very handsome, well-bred, well-broke beast, with housings of a gorgeous description, so that I got on smoothly enough, but some others of the party were less fortunate. It seemed that the doctor's ass, generally accustomed to go alone, was apt, when in the company of his fellows, to be seized with hostile dispositions towards them, on which occasions, as the brute was as strong as an elephant and as dogged as a mule, no means of securing peace were to be found but in diverting his attention and expending his energies by a brief gallop.

Accordingly, very often in the midst of a most interesting conversation, the doctor, who was on the qui vive for the first symptoms of such demonstrations, would suddenly strike his spurs into the beast's sides, administer a sounding whack of his cane on its head, and shoot ahead into the desert at full gallop, perform a series of wheels, curvets, and meanderings, then return, and, without remark or comment, resume the thread of his discourse exactly where he had broken it.

Presently we came to the bank of a steep ravine; at the bottom flowed a green and sluggish stream, most untempting to sight and smell, and on the opposite shore rose an Arab village, with its mud-huts, dogs, goats, fowls, and half-naked children, and its perpetual atmosphere of peat smoke, by far the most wholesome and savoury of the odours in which those dens are rich.

Along the side of this ravine, by a narrow

footpath, wholly unprotected, and of steep descent, lay our way. Some of the party, mistrustful of their donkeys' fore-legs, and not relishing the notion of a roll into the slimy current below, an event which a false step would render almost inevitable, dismounted; but the doctor, confident that here, at least, his palfrey was to be trusted, boldly led the way, and I and one or two others followed, still mounted, down to where a rude bridge crossed the water, and up a yet steeper ascent to the top of the other bank, where we waited until rejoined by the walkers. Of course then came the usual salutation of barks, snarls, and howls from the troop of village dogs that had followed our course along the bank of the stream for the sole satisfaction of displaying these marks of ferocity—a ferocity so allied with their usual cowardice, that of the stones with which we acknowledged their greetings only one went far enough to reach its aim, and set the beast off yelping with its tail between its legs. A few children, too, arrived with the usual "Meskeen, ya sit, backsheesh, backsheesh!"—a beggar, O lady, a gift! The appeals, however, were unanswered, and we proceeded over the sands, bound firm and close in most places by a thin burnt scattered herbage, and by one or two sorts of creeping plants, lying close to the soil, clasping it with fibrous fingers, and displaying little yellow and purple tufted blossoms, till we reached the remains, very distinctly visible by its flint borders, of the ancient Roman road, leading from the coast inland. A few paces further on, we reached the excavations which are gradually laying bare the site of the great city, the rival of Rome, with her temples, and her palaces, and her vast necropolis, where, by a strange contradiction, the resting-places and remains of the dead are in a far more perfect and recognisable condition than the most magnificent dwellings and resorts of the living.

And this was ancient Alexandria! A great mound of sand, cut in parts into pits and hollows, with narrow perilous paths between them, by Arab fellahs, in the hope of finding buried treasures, or to take the fragments of marble—white, green, and grey—the blocks of granite and red porphyry, the portions of fluted columns, the capitals of acanthus-crowned pillars, to build their miserable huts, or to be burned for lime!

At the mouth of a newly-opened tomb we dismounted, and, looking in, found it contained the uncoffined remains of two bodies. I very much wished to bring away the skulls, which, as they lay, seemed quite perfect; but, on bringing them out, they crumbled to pieces in our hands.

All around were tombs; some half open and perfectly preserving their shape, and even the firm unbroken texture of their interior walls; some fallen in; some filled and covered with sand, bones, and fragments of granite and stone dug out in excavating.

The Arabs have a great objection to touching the remains of the dead, by which, being un-

clean, they are defiled, and when they come upon them, either leave them in the tombs, or dig them into the sand with all expedition.

Lying in one of the pits was a splendid granite sarcophagus, very large and deep, quite intact, and with all its edges and the carvings on its sides as fresh and sharp as if the chisel had been but recently employed on them. How I longed to possess that wonderful coffin! What barbarism it seemed to leave it there, knowing that almost infallibly its fate would be to be broken up, and its fragments embedded in mud for the walls of a hut no better than a pigsty, or burnt for what lime could be made from them.

Perhaps its great size and hardness (certainly not its interest or beauty) may preserve it from Arab greed till some one with my desire, and with something very far beyond my means, may secure it for some collection, public or private.

Leaving the hollows, we, carefully threading our way, passed in single file along the crumbling paths that intersect them, and reached the highest part of the mound, beneath which still lies buried the greater part of this portion of the Greek capital. On the brink of one of the deepest excavations we paused to look around.

Below, in tiers, along the wall-like sides of the pit, yawned the niches where were deposited the skeletons of old Hellens, the very forms of whose white crumbling skulls showed how perfect had been the type of the race that had served as models for the works their own hands have transmitted to us.

Two thousand years ago—more than two thousand years ago—lived those men and those women whose bones we now looked on and handled!

Two thousand years!

Around us, spurned by the feet of asses, lay portions of marble pavement, pearl-grey, delicately veined, carved into radiated and geometrical patterns, smooth and polished. Acanthus-leaves, white and of glistening grain, each leaflet rough and sharp, struck out boldly without pattern, by an artistic hand, whose chisel-marks were still clear and crisp; pieces of red porphyry, white speckled, presenting here a smooth and still slightly polished surface, there a rougher side, to which yet adhered portions of the cement that had united it to its sister block in the inner wall, probably, of a palace.

And beyond all, the yet older, the unchanged and unchanging sea, its dark waters moaning on a low rock-scattered coast, beneath a heavy lowering purple sky, streaked here and there with the lurid red of a sun that had gone down in anger.

I bore away specimens of all the fragments I have described, and of some others as well, and they now remind me, seldom without a sigh, of that wondrous evening in the dead and buried city, whose age it is difficult to realise in gazing on some of its relics.

Before I left Alexandria, Dr. S. made up for my disappointment in the matter of the skulls, by giving me one he had found at the ne-

ropolis in perfect preservation, except with the usual absence of the lower jaw. The shape is singularly beautiful and finely organised. It is small, and such teeth as remain are white and perfectly sound, leading to the conclusion that it is the skull of a woman, quite young, yet arrived at early womanhood, from the fact that one of the wisdom-teeth is cut, and the other just piercing the bone of the gum. In addition to the beautifully-balanced form of the skull, the shape of the orbits of the eyes, the shortness of the upper lip, and the general delicacy of the modelling even of the bones of the face, are suggestive of loveliness, and as the white smooth softly-rounded cranium of my Greek beauty, as I am persuaded she was, reposes on a shelf in my sanctum between those of a man of these days, of fair ordinary development, and of an idiot, frontless and hideous, one sees, not without surprise, how great is the folly of the old saying that beauty is only skin deep.

Some of the party being fatigued, proceeded the shortest way home, but Dr. S. having mentioned some interesting Roman remains along the coast, which there would be just light enough to see, the rest of us decided on that route.

The beach here is narrow, covered with ledges of sharp rocks difficult to pick one's way among, and bounded landward by frowning rugged dark cliffs, and in some places by giant fragments of Roman masonry, some standing, some fallen, but holding together in vast blocks as though nothing less than the crack of doom could crumble them. These are chiefly the ruins of baths; the remains of the passage from the buildings down to the water is still visible, and faintly gleaming through the waves may be seen the white marble pavement on which the luxurious bathers trod.

And now we had seen all, and the rapid twilight was merging into darkness, and quite silent we went our way homeward by the moaning sea. Suddenly a scarlet flash rent the blackening horizon, and a low sullen reverberation came across the sea.

It was the evening gun from the fort built out at the mouth of the harbour. We were amid civilisation again. Will the sound of the cannon be considered emblematic of civilisation at the end of a third thousand of years? A climb up a bank, a short ride across a patch of desert, and we were once more in the streets of modern Alexandria, with its new ruins, its dilapidated dwellings, its dogs, its dirt, and its festivities. To one of these festivities I went in the evening. What a contrast it presented to our morning excursion!

We started about ten o'clock, and, once out of the town, found ourselves in the midst of a tide of carriages all flowing in the same direction—many of them preceded by saises, running Arab grooms, carrying meschals*—towards the

villa of Count X——, the founder of the feast, who lived a little way out of Alexandria, on the banks of the canal. The effect was strangely picturesque. Through the black night, which was pitch dark, would come dashing by the flying figure with its swarthy face and white garments, brought out strongly by the red light of the flaring meschal, scattering flakes of fire as it passed; and again the darkness swallowed it up and it was gone, though the dancing torch and its fiery wake marked its course through the obscurity.

A night drive out of the town is not unattended with danger, from the infamous condition of the roads, the wholly unprotected state of the borders of the canal—the cause of many accidents—and the mode of driving of Arab arrabagees, or coachmen, who have a liberal easy sort of fashion of giving their horses the run of both sides of the road and the middle of the road, and who, in return, claim neither as a right when passing or meeting other vehicles, but leave it to Allah to decide whether a collision shall or shall not result.

Some of the Alexandrians add to these risks that of robbers, but this peril seemed to me imaginary, though the fear of it kept some of the guests away. I may state, however, that most of the invited were Greeks.

Arrived at the gate of the garden, in the midst of which the house stood, the usual scene of confusion attendant upon any approach to a throng of carriages awaited us. No Arab, whether mounted or on foot, has the remotest idea of getting out of the way, and no blue-liveried policeman is here to compel him to get out of the way. The dire and hopeless crush and cram and aimless excitement that ensue may be imagined. Horses plunge, carriages crash, arrabagees flog shriek and swear, saises dash about frantically, tugging at the heads of the fiery little Arabs, and making matters worse by scattering flames from their meschals among the crowd. At last, chiefly by dint of the coolness of our English coachman, we get safely landed, and one step within the precincts of the garden changes the whole scene.

The early December night is as mild and sweet as a June night in England, and through its solemn gloom rise up the rich odours of unknown flowers. The sky-blue mansion, showing only its broad façade, its columned terrace to which you mount by broad easy flights of carpeted stairs, and its large lighted windows, looks like an Italian palace. Under the portico stand a group of gentlemen in ball costume and bare-headed, two of whom, though strangers to us, bow, and offer us their arms, which we ("we" are ladies), of course, accept. We are led into the vast hall, where they take off our cloaks, and where we are presented with bouquets of roses, scented geranium, double joenquils, and myrtle. Then, repeating the bows, they return to their posts. These gentlemen are a kind of stewards of the fête—generally relations, or it may be intimate friends of the host, and deputed by him to perform this ceremony; which appeared to me

* A sort of torch, consisting of an iron basket filled with some resinous compound, borne on the top of a pole.

a very graceful and courteous one, and which is extended to all ladies, whether attended by a cavalier or not.

The reception-rooms, of which there seemed to be at least six or seven, were all on the ground floor, and most of them were of splendid proportions; the floors were made of a sort of coarse scagliola, in patterns, and some of the walls and ceilings were rather prettily painted. A profusion of brilliant Egyptian flowers in great vases added much to the gaiety of the coup d'œil; but, conspicuous among all, blazed whole branches of the gorgeous pointsetias, which in the count's garden were particularly fine.

This fête was especially interesting to me, as being composed almost exclusively of the foreign society of Alexandria, and notably of the Levantine element, which English people have but few opportunities of encountering. With the exception of our consul-general, his secretary, and one or two others, beside our own party of three, I believe there were no English present. Having paid our respects to the mistress of the house, we were placed on a sofa at the upper end of the chief reception-room. As dancing had hardly commenced, we had time to look about us, and to note the guests who were still flocking in, and the ladies ranged in a circle round the room. These, to my disappointment, all wore ordinary European costume, which was neither fresh, nor in good taste, nor gracefully worn; the only exception was in the instance of one little very old lady who sat in a bundle in the corner; in such a bundle that you could hardly tell in what fashion her dark silk dress was made, and could only distinguish that her head was covered with the silken skull-cap, bound round, turban-wise, with a small handkerchief, that forms the ordinary Levantine head-dress. But the younger women, when full dressed, dress their hair with elaborate complications, into which enter a quantity of natural flowers of every kind and hue.

I have been in many parts of the world. I have seen on their own ground all sorts of women, from the radiant daughters of "all the Howards" to the dusky North American squaws. But such fat women, and so many fat women, I never saw in any land as those Levantine ladies there assembled. Talk of Turkish women, fattened like crammed turkeys! The harems boast much flesh. You see in their narrow precincts many plump faces and redundant busts ill contained by the loose garment that covers them; many sturdy legs and pudsey hands. But what are all those beside the vast proportions of these "fat-fleshed" fair ones? While girls are yet in their teens the doom begins to fall on them. The commencement is far from objectionable. It is agreeable to see well-rounded arms and shoulders that you are "tempted to pat" at the so often lean ages of fifteen and sixteen. These are almost always accompanied by, item, a pair of long dark almond eyes, "put in with a dirty finger," as Lady Morgan writes; eyes that alternately flash and languish at the owner's command, and that are

shaded by thick black straight brows, not unfrequently adopting the very doubtful

charm of married brows,

item, dense heaps of black coarse wavy hair, that lies on the head and on the neck in the massive way you see depicted in old Egyptian paintings; and sometimes, though rarely, you see fine complexions.

So far, so good; except that these damsels look like comely matrons, or "fine girls" who have flirted through some ten or twelve seasons, and having has yet not found any of the first-class matches sufficiently appreciative of their charms, are becoming condescending, nay, even encouraging, to the second class. But now turn to the mothers. We have just been rather admiring a plump short-necked damsel with bright eyes and rosy cheeks and dimpling smiles, looking like a cherubim *prolonged*. There is her mother sitting opposite—look on this picture and on that—and see the full-blown rose whose bud we have just been contemplating.

She can hardly be forty, and her smooth face yet bears traces of considerable comeliness. But the bright dark eyes are embedded in fat, the nose is sunk and lost in fat, the smiling mouth is buried in fat. Of neck there is no symptom: the head rests behind on a *hump* of fat; before, on a protuberance like the crop of a pouter pigeon. Her arms! Poor soul! Yet she does not seem to mind it; there she sits, smiling benignly, the picture of serene contentment; and, except that the frequent exercise of her fan hints that the "too solid flesh" *does* manifest a disposition to "melt," even in the pleasant and by no means high temperature of the spacious airy and not over-crowded rooms, her condition seems in no wise distressful to her.

I walked about the rooms. There was no regular supper, but fruits, cakes, ices, and other refreshments, abundantly intermingled with flowers, were laid out in one of them. A few of the men wore Eastern costume, but they were quite the exception. Some of the young Greeks—who showed none of the tendency to obesity so strongly developed in their mothers and sisters, but were generally spare, oval-faced, and olive-complexioned, and had heads of compact black frizzy hair like the women—seemed to dance rather well and to bear themselves correctly. Not so many of the damsels. I saw some convert the sober monotony of the uninteresting quadrille into a very jolly game, nearly approaching to a romp. How they skipped and giggled, and swung hands and beckoned and gambolled, until their at first by no means fresh toilettes became mere chiffons, and the flowers tumbled out of their hair, it boots not now to tell. Suffice is to say, that the presence of Mr. Turveydrop, with a few hints from that accomplished reflexion of the first gentleman in Europe on the subject of Deportment, would have been remarkably à propos.

Soon after twelve the rooms began to thin a little, and we left at about half-past, much

amused with the evening's entertainment: albeit I confess to a surfeit of the monotony of black hair, black eyes, and olive tints, and to a longing for the soft pearly whites, the bright or delicate roses, the blue sweet eyes, and the fair or red-brown tresses, rarely seen but in the sister islands of these our northern seas.

THE TRICK OF THE TRAPEZE.

WHEN I practised as a boy on the gymnastic "swinging-bar," nobody ever heard of a trapeze; but under that fine name the old swinging-bar has now come into glory. Well it might, if there were truth in picture posters. Surely, methought, I have much yet to learn. Never had I been taught to stiffen myself horizontally, with arms stretched to their utmost, fingers extended, and one leg straight, with the other assuming that air of "kicking gracefulness" so much deprecated in painting, but so generally introduced into woodcuts. Neither, when I throw a somersault, am I in the habit of projecting my chin, forcing my occiput between my shoulder-blades, and thrusting my arms forward as if about to take the first stroke in swimming. Yet, if artists really draw from life, as certain accessories would suggest they did, these are the attitudes assumed by Leotard and his followers, and all my teachings are radically false. Of course I went to see for myself, and had the satisfaction of finding that old-fashioned gymnastics were not superseded after all, and that the strange attitudes of the performer are perhaps owing to the inability of the non-gymnastic artist to resolve the rapid and ever-varying movements of the trapezist. It is simply impossible for a man to project himself horizontally through the air as if he had been shot out of a catapult. If any one will take the trouble to watch a performer while passing along the series of trapezes, he will find that the position is almost entirely perpendicular, and that when he is sweeping through the air between the trapezes, the body is as upright as when he stands on the dull earth. Neither is the gymnast foolish enough to stretch out his arms after the fashion of engravings. He keeps his arms bent, with hands close to the chest, ready to dart them out and grasp at the approaching trapeze. For it is always easier to fling the arm forward than to draw it back, and whereas too short a stroke will merely cause the performer to come to the ground, a casualty for which he is always prepared; an overshoot stroke will assuredly break one arm if not both, and hurl the unfortunate gymnast on his head or flat on his back.

There is this remarkable feature in muscular, as indeed in literary and all other gymnastics, that the inexperienced public invariably mistakes the important points, fails to appreciate the really difficult part of the performance, and preserves all its applause for the simplest and easiest, but the most showy feats. As a muscular gymnast,

I speak feelingly, for I have often exhibited before select assemblies, and have invariably found that really difficult achievements have been silently passed over, while easy but dashing feats, such as throwing a somersault over a horse, or dropping from a trapeze and catching by the feet, are rewarded with loud cheers. So it is with the performances of the many trapezists who have followed in the track of Leotard, the great master of his art. It is no very difficult matter to pass from one trapeze to another. It requires a certain dash and courage, but not more than a thorough course of gymnastics can impart to any ordinary pupil, the difficulty being, of course, in exact proportion to the distance between the trapezes. The real skill lies in the absolute exactness of balance, in the seizing of the bar at the precise moment when the weight of the body is brought to bear in the proper direction, and in the perfect line in which the body is "delivered" between the ropes.

It is not enough merely to catch the bar. Any one can do that who dares. The first great point is to catch it so as to preserve the original impetus, and to be able to add fresh force when required, as is always the case before the trapezist has come to the end of his swing. The necessity for such a power is evident from the fact that if a leaden mass of the same weight as the performer were fastened to the rope, and launched from the elevated perch, it would not return to the point whence it started, owing to the resistance of the air (which feels to the performer like being whirled along on the outside of an express train), and the friction of the swivels whereon the ropes are suspended. The performer must therefore have a perfect command over the instrument, and be able to give to the return swing an additional force which will serve to compensate for the loss of power through resistance of the air. No one who has not personally experienced this resistance can form the least idea of its intensity, of the fierce rush of air as of a tornado, and the entire deprivation of breath which it occasions to the neophyte.

In the somewhat severe school where I learned my lessons, the arrangements were so exactly balanced, that the loss of a pound's weight of force, or the slightest deviation from the precise line, would produce inevitable and ignominious failure. After we had practised on the trapeze for some time, and were tolerably proficient upon it, we were shifted to the single rope, without a bar for the hands, or even a knot as a resting-place. This rope hung from the centre of the building, and was long enough to reach within twenty inches of the ground. We ascended a perpendicular ladder at one end of the building, had the rope thrown to us, and were just able to catch the extremity and to hold it, with arms stretched to their utmost. The feat was, to launch ourselves from the ladder, swing to the opposite end of the building, turn in the air, swing back again, and reassume our perch on the ladder. It is hardly possible to exaggerate the difficulty of this

feat. The reader will observe that, owing to the length of the rope, and the very limited space which intervened between its extremity and the ground, it was necessary to gather up the body by the mere force of the arms, exactly in the spot where the strain is most terrible, to allow the body to elongate gradually as it passed the centre of the swing, to turn round in the air when at the end of the sway, there to "put on" force enough to return, and lastly to pass back to the ladder, the process of gathering up and elongating the body having to be again gone through. The force of the strain depends upon the position of the performer. When he has come to either end of the swing, there is a moment when he is suspended motionless in air, the body being balanced between the two forces. It is just that moment which is chosen for shifting from one side of the trapeze to the other, for turning in the air, or performing similar feats. Should the performer loosen his hold at that instant, he would fall to the ground like a stone. As the body swings towards the centre, the strain is gradually increased until it reaches the climax, just under the spot where the ropes are suspended, appearing to a novice as if it would tear his arms out of their sockets. It may be imagined, therefore, what must have been the difficulty with the single rope, with which there was never more than an inch to spare, and where the relaxation of that single inch was sure to produce disastrous results. I have seen aspiring novices, whose ambition has overleaped their prudence, attempt the single rope before they had subjected the muscles of the arms and loins to sufficient training, and so make of themselves a most pitiable example, as a warning to the thoughtless. It is a very pleasant thing to perform the feat, to feel the fierce luxury of the sweep through the air, and the inward satisfaction of difficulties overcome. But it is not pleasant to give way just in the centre of the swing, to be ground ignominiously along the earth for several yards in a series of spiral evolutions, impossible to be checked, but causing an excruciating rasp to the skin, and grinding to bits that portion of the dress which happens to be lowest. Neither is the slow painful walk homeward agreeable, nor is it very pleasant to be debarred at all times, and in all companies, the natural use of a chair, and to be forced to rest in strange and ungainly attitudes, until the superficial but very painful injuries are healed.

A second important element in the proper management of the trapeze is, that the weight shall be thrown precisely on the centre. If the hands should grasp the bar on one side, or if the weight of the body should be thrown to the right or left, even by a single pound, the result is to force the trapeze out of the due line, and to put an immediate stop to the performance. A side weight on a trapeze is every whit as powerful as a siding on a billiard-ball, and it is quite possible for a master of the art to swing round an obstacle placed directly in his path, or even to steer his way between two objects that are only

just sufficiently apart to permit the bar to pass between them.

The third element of success is the exact timing of the swing, so that the bar shall be caught just as it poises itself for the return. Of course, if the performer should be too late, he is forced either to wait for another swing, or to throw a somersault, come to the ground, and start afresh. But should he be too hasty and meet the bar as it swings towards him, the two opposing forces neutralise each other, a sharp stunning jerk ensues, and the performer either loses his hold and falls to the ground, or finds himself checked in mid-career, all out of time, and his arms strained as if they had been subjected to severe treatment on the rack.

There is not the least difficulty in passing from the first trapeze to the second; the real difficulty lies in the passage from the second to the third, and from the third to the fourth, because in order to achieve that feat it is needful that the timing should be accurate as that of a chronometer, and the weight thrown precisely in the proper place. I know few disappointments which sting so sharply at the time as "missing the tip" at this exercise. You are in full sway, feeling everything go like clockwork, your trapezes are swinging to perfection, you get careless of your stroke, you catch your bar just a trifle on one side, and away you go out of the line in a horribly ignominious manner, having suffered a defeat that cannot by any dexterity be metamorphosed into a victory. You cannot conceal your misfortune by throwing a somersault and looking as if you meant it, because you are swinging diagonally, and a diagonal somersault is apt to produce very unpleasant sensations about the hips, besides the great probability of flinging the unhappy performer on his back. You cannot make a dash at the next trapeze, because your little circuit has lost the time, and you would be too late. So there you swing between heaven and earth, a misery to yourself, and an object of derision to the spectators. We have certainly seen Leotard commit this error, and force himself again into the line before reaching the next trapeze, but the skill and strength required to do so are of such a nature that none but a consummate master of the art would dare to attempt so hazardous a feat. It will be seen that the error only tends to perpetuate itself. Just as a rifle-ball that misses a target by a few inches at a distance of a hundred yards will miss it by many yards at ten times that distance, so an error of a foot at the first trapeze will increase to a yard at the second.

The effect of the second mistake, namely, an error in point of time, is equally disagreeable. You meet the second trapeze too soon, and the fault instantly makes itself felt by the blow of the bar against the hands, and the succeeding jerk, which seems to dislocate half the joints in the body. Your feet get in advance of your hands; you make a frantic effort to recover the lost force; you catch the next bar; you reach the little perch from which you started, and you flatter yourself that you have just managed to

smoothe over the difficulty. Vain hope. No sooner have your feet touched the perch, and you give the little sway that brings you upright, than you gently tip over forward, and away you go again, on a palpably bootless errand. There is no help for it, and the only plan is then to accept the position like a man, come to the ground, remount the perch, and start afresh.

It is a glorious exercise, this trapeze. There is nothing like it in gymnastics for fascination or usefulness. The mystery seizes its votaries heart and soul and enlists them for ever in its service, from which no deserters ever abscond, against which no traitors ever turn. I know of few sensations more soul-stirring than the exultant feeling of freedom which pulses through the frame as one sweeps through the air and hears the wind rush by. Then, to hurl oneself through space, to feel perfectly safe whether suspended by the hands or legs, whether swinging at full length, or gathered up into an undistinguishable bundle of arms and legs, is a sensation that is worth feeling. Accomplished swimmers partake of a similar feeling of elation, when tossing upon the lofty waves, lying coolly as the rolling billows raise their recumbent bodies aloft or lower them gently into the watery valleys, where nothing is to be seen but water around and sky above, and yet enjoying the sense that they are in perfect safety, and that they are masters of the element.

I have tried almost every gymnastic apparatus, including the slack and tight ropes, now euphuistically called by French titles, and am of opinion that the trapeze is superior to them all for the many merits which it combines. It develops exactly the very muscles in which we, as a nation, are deficient, namely, those of the chest and loins, and imparts a strength that can be obtained in no other manner. Let a man, no matter how powerful his muscular system, be put on a trapeze for the first time, and set off swinging, or even allowed to hang motionless, and then told to bring his feet over the bar, he will find the apparently simple task as practically impossible as jumping over the moon. He will kick and plunge about like a drowning man, will get very red in the face, and make himself an altogether ridiculous object: every plunge will only serve to exhaust his failing powers, and in a very short time he will be forced to loosen his hold.

Now, there are continually cases where the simple ability to raise the feet to the level of the hands, or to hang by the finger-tips, will save a man's life, and possibly through him the lives of many others. In modern houses the stair-cases are mere fire-traps, and are built as if for the express purpose of leading the flames through the house in the quickest way, and effectually debarring the inmates from their ordinary mode of escape. Most men, on finding their egress by the stairs cut off by a body of rushing flame, would either leap out of window and fracture their limbs, or perish miserably in the smoke. But a gymnast will instinctively put his head out of window, and with a glance take in the surrounding conditions. Should

there be time, he will quietly lower himself by a rope extemporised from sheets and blankets; should there be a waterspout within reach, he will descend as easily as down a ladder; or should there be a parapet above, he will seize it with his hands, draw his feet over, and escape to another house, or at all events to the side of the house which is yet free from the flames. Or he can pass along a ledge only an inch in depth, by shifting his hands, and so transfer himself to a friendly spout, or traverse the wall until he finds a suitable place on which to drop. Failing even such slight advantages as these he can suspend himself by his hands for an almost unlimited period; for the power of grasp that enables him to cling to the swift-moving trapeze through its wide swing renders the suspension of the body a very simple feat; and if at the same time he can find a resting-place for a foot, his position will be quite easy, even though his feet should be higher than his head. A trapezist is perfectly indifferent as to the relative position of his head and feet, having been accustomed to swing by his legs, insteps, or even by a single leg hitched over the bar. He never becomes giddy at a height, or at a sudden reversal of attitude, and is happily ignorant of the inconvenience caused by the blood rushing to the head.

For instruction, the trapeze is unrivalled, as it forces the pupil to apply his powers in a proper direction. If, for example, he is being taught to develop his chest by grasping the bar and lifting himself until his chin is above his hands, he cannot effect the feat by a jerk or a swing, as on a fixed bar, for unless the force be exactly perpendicular, the trapeze swings away and balks the irregular attempt. If, again, the loins and abdominal muscles—pitifully weak in most Englishmen—are to be strengthened, the pupil cannot injure himself by vain plunges with his legs, for no sooner does he push his feet forward than he sets the trapeze off into a circular kind of swing, and down come his feet to the ground.

When once the course of instruction has been completed, and the gymnast feels himself fairly at home on his bar, he may be assured that he has attained a skill for which he will ever feel grateful, and the benefit of which he will never lose. Even after long disuse, and in spite of the natural stiffness brought on by increasing years and a sedentary life, the power remains, though its exercise is not so easy as in the olden times, and a swing on the bar produces unpleasant stiffness the next morning. I, who write, have learned this fact from practical experience. For the space of fourteen years I was debarr'd from gymnastic exercises, and never even saw a trapeze, except at a circus. Yet, upon returning into country life, I hung an extemporised trapeze on the branch of a tree, and was surprised to find that I could twist about the bar as in the days of yore, though with a little more expenditure of labour, and could swing by a single leg with perfect confidence, and fling myself to the ground by a back-

ward somersault with ease and certainty. Of course I must not be understood to imply that ordinary pupils should be taught to perform the daring and difficult feats which are achieved by professional acrobats, whose whole lives are devoted to muscular development. But a good steady working mind requires a healthy body for its lodgment, and the intellect is not only more enduring, but is keener and brighter when the body is in thorough health: a blessing which now seldom falls to the lot of those whose work is of the brain unduly more than of the hands. The present writer owes all his health to the course of gymnastics through which he passed, and which, after he had broken down from sedentary mental exertion and fallen into a habit of annual fever, gave him back his body and mind strong to bear the freest use.

OUR LAST ATTEMPT.

BY A GARIBALDINO.

V. CATANIA.

I SCARCELY ever passed as busy a day as on that Saturday at Catania. I was appointed orderly to the General, but I found myself at every one's bidding! Whenever I carried a message, be it to Corte, Nullo, Bideschini, or any other, they were sure to send me on some private mission of their own. It was always the same story. "I'm not quite ready to reply to this; but, meanwhile, do me the favour to look up the commissary about those shoes, or that hat, or those red shirts; and if you should see any vegetables, or good fruit, or any fresh fish, send them up here;" "Ordinanza! remember we have no wine, no straw, no cross-belts, no percussion-caps!" such were the reminders addressed to me from all sides, and in a way that showed a very considerable laxity of all organisation, and a profound confidence in my influence. If I was worried and jaded, and overworked to a state little short of exhaustion, I was, let me own it, warmed by the nature of my employment into a high state of enthusiasm. I felt myself in a great enterprise. It was a great stake we played for. Our adversaries were great and powerful—Popes and Emperors! The man under whom I immediately served, was himself one of the greatest of his age. A hero, who remained a hero, even to those who came into his intimacy and saw him nearly and frequently. If I continually came in upon lively discussions and disputes as to how far the King's government was really with us, whether we were to have the same measure meted out to us, as on the former expedition—ignored at first, then connived at, then recognised and abetted, or to be distinctly disavowed—I never took the slightest interest in these argumentations. My faith was entirely in Garibaldi; he had done scores of things which none but himself had ever dreamt of; achieved successes which all the wise ones declared impossibilities, and why should he fail now? Was the Pope, with his mercenaries, stronger than the King of Naples, with his fleet and his army? Was the public

opinion of Europe more favourable to the dark doings of the Vatican than to the crimes of Caserta? A few such unanswerable queries smothered all my misgivings, and there was not in the whole force a more trusting, believing Garibaldian than I was!

One unhappy incident threw a gloom over this day. It was the dismissal from our service of a young officer called Grazziani, a Tuscan, I believe; he had dared to speak disparagingly of our means of attack, and the constitution of our force, and of the certainty that the government would disavow us. Being questioned as to all this, he declared that he had so spoken; and he believed, besides, that more than half of those who followed us had been duped and deceived. It was rumoured that Corte ordered him to be shot; but that Garibaldi, hearing of the affair in time, simply said: "These opinions will do him some good in Turin. Let him go back and repeat them to Ratazzi!" and with this milder sentence he was sent adrift.

I had not any suspicion at the time, though I have learned since, the fatal effects produced by this first inkling of distrust. Nothing, however, could have increased the confidence I felt in Garibaldi, save the mood in which he treated this event. It was so high-hearted, so generous, and so noble. As he said himself: "In a regular army, the crimes against discipline must be heavily dealt with; but, in a force like ours, new to restraint, unused to repression, patriotism must be the provost-marshal, and good fellowship the bond of obedience."

It was nine o'clock of the evening before I got time to eat my dinner, and even that meal I despatched on the steps of the "Municipality," where the General lodged, by the light of a paper lantern, and with a clasp-knife for all table equipage. A staff officer brought me a flask of excellent wine and half a dozen cigars, and I never enjoyed myself more.

While I was deliberating with myself whether I'd repair to the little café on the opposite of the piazza, or send over to have my cup of "Moka" brought to me, I fell fast asleep where I was, my head resting on the rude cornice at the base of one of the lions in marble. I was awakened by what I thought to be a violent kick, but soon found that a heavy man had tripped over me in the dark, and rolled headlong down the flight of stone steps into the piazza. It was Corte, who had just left the General, to ascertain what was doing in the bay. I picked him up, and gave him my arm to help him along, for he was bruised by his fall, and limped badly. On learning who I was he grew very friendly, and assured me that if Garibaldi had rightly heard my name, he would take care to place me in a more becoming position. "Not that he likes men to jump into promotion," added he, "on any grounds of rank or fortune, still less of family influence. He never made Menotti anything but his orderly all through the Lombard campaign. It was the war minister made him an officer. You'll have to win your spurs, but you'll be sure of them when you have won them."

He then asked if I knew how to row, and was delighted to find I was a good boatman. "Let us find a skiff, if we can," said he, "and learn what is going on in the bay, for they have got a story that Tolosano, the late prefect, has emissaries in the town with whom he corresponds, and has even a plan on foot to capture the General, and carry him on board the Duke of Genoa."

I was not long in securing a rather leaky little boat, with a pair of rude oars, in which we at once put to sea. The night was dark as pitch, the clouds lying very low, and the air perfectly still. "Make a stretch out," said he, "past that point, and perhaps we shall see the frigates." In about half an hour's rowing, I rounded the headland, and saw, at less than a quarter of a mile off, a green light on the poop, and a bright light in the rigging, of a vessel I guessed to be the Duke. As I ceased rowing, I could hear the low growl of steam from a fire heavily banked, and could perceive that they held themselves in readiness to move at a moment's notice.

"It is as I told you," whispered Corte; "they hope to kidnap Garibaldi to-night, and carry him off a prisoner to Genoa in the morning. I know Girod, the captain, well, and he is just the man to feel heart-broken at being sent on such a service."

"But that would mean that they intended to swamp the whole expedition!" said I, in innocent surprise.

"They are capable of that, and worse," was his dry answer. "Do you think," continued he, "we could creep a little closer, and hear if there were anything like preparations going on?"

I stretched out, with a long silent stroke, and, in some ten or twelve minutes, we had the great hull of the frigate, and her towering spars, as if actually leaning over us. All was perfectly quiet on board. I could hear the step of the officer on watch, and the heavier tramp of the sentinel near the gangway, but not a word was spoken.

"If the General were here now," whispered Corte, "he'd go back for a party and board her."

I laughed at the notion, and suddenly a deep voice shouted out from the poop deck, "Who goes there?"

"Friends!" replied I, at once.

"A larga! Keep off!" cried he, sternly, thus showing that my friendly assurances were not satisfactory; and, thus warned, I swept the head of the skiff round, and made haste back to shore.

My companion never uttered a word as we went, and only gave me a simple "Good-by," as he touched the land and disappeared in the darkness.

I believe I began to suspect that we were not such good friends with the present ministry as the former expedition had been with Count Cavour, but, after all, the same thing which won Cavour to our side would win Ratazzi. Cavour was with us because we succeeded, so would Ratazzi also. As to capturing Garibaldi, the man who effected such an exploit would be dis-

graced and execrated, and the very government who had perhaps instigated it would never protect the base tool who did it.

I lulled myself to rest with a number of wise thoughts of this kind, and at last lay down in the bottom of the boat, and slept till day broke.

Two large mercantile steamers had come in during the night, the one a French mail-boat, the Abattucci, the other a smaller trading vessel, the Dispaccio. To my surprise, as I awoke, the boats of both these were now on shore with a strong guard of our red-shirted fellows over them. There was, however, such a crowd and such a noise of people talking at the landing-place, that I could learn nothing of what was going on, and so I went up into the town, and to the headquarters in the piazza.

"It's all right," said a young officer, whose name I did not know, but who had fetched me the wine the day before. "Ratazzi has given in; Cialdini will be balked this time. Here are the vessels to carry us across to Calabria, and the frigates have put out to sea, not to be obliged to molest us."

"Is this really true?" asked I, in astonishment.

"If you only go up to the lighthouse you'll see it for yourself. That is, if the smoke of the Duke has not already vanished from view. See, they have heard the news already; see how the poor fellows are delighted."

And now, through every street and lane that opened into the piazza came flocking hundreds of red-shirted fellows in wildest confusion, rending the air with cries of "Viva Garibaldi!" "Viva il prode Generale!" In an instant the piazza was so full that the immense mass could only heave and quake like one great monster, while the shouts grew louder, and fuller, and hoarser, mingled with yells of "Fuori il Generale! Fuori Garibaldi!" This went on for some time, with occasional outbursts of laughter at the disappointments that ensued on a window being opened, and some face—not Garibaldi's—being presented to public gaze. At last, when expectancy was almost becoming irritation, the window over the central balcony was flung wide open, and Garibaldi came out. He looked heated, agitated, and I fancied half angry. He raised his hand for silence, and not a word was uttered; the great assembly seemed actually spell-bound.

"A Roma! Amici mei, a Roma!" cried he. "Viva Vittorio Emanuele! Viva il Re!"

A perfect yell of "A Roma!" followed this, but I could not hear one cry of "Viva il Re!"

I do not remember after this ever hearing the cry of "Viva il Re!" being raised amongst us.

VI. THE VOYAGE ACROSS THE STRAIT.

I HAVE little to say of the voyage, for I was not far removed from a state of asphyxia the whole time it occupied. I was on board the smaller vessel, the Dispaccio, on which was Garibaldi; he could not bring himself, I was told, to sail under the flag of France. We were eight hundred of us crammed into a space

not really sufficient for five hundred. Many had clambered up the rigging, or sat out on the bowsprit, and when an officer fainted from the excessive heat, and showed few signs of recovery, the General had him placed in a boat and hoisted up between the masts—a measure which, I believe, saved his life.

I suffered terribly, for I was close to the steam-stack, and so overcome by heat and suffocation, that all passed before me like a dreadful nightmare. The noise and tumult were deafening. Garibaldi did his utmost to enforce silence. He declared that if by our uproar we attracted the attention of Albini's squadron and were pursued, the whole expedition might be frustrated and destroyed. It was no use; the Picciotti were beyond all control of themselves or others.

I know I was far from being clear-headed, or that my faculties were in a state to form a calm or correct judgment, but I felt at the time that for no human consideration, for no bribe ambition could offer me, would I consent to be the chief of such a horde. As I clambered upon a bulwark to get a moment's fresh air, I was not a little abashed at the ill humour I had given way to, as I saw the helmsman at the wheel calmly smoking his cigar with a cheerful countenance. It was General Garibaldi himself who was steering, and following the track of the Abattucci, about four miles in advance of us.

We dropped anchor in a little bay under Melito, where the Abattucci was lying when we came up. The first boat that went on shore contained Menotti, Guastalla, and two or three of the staff. They found a suitable landing-place at once; no very difficult matter, for we had no heavy ordnance, nor, indeed, guns of any kind. The boats which carried the men carried their baggage, and the most unwieldy article of transport I remember was an old South American saddle of Garibaldi's, which required two stout fellows to bring up from the boat.

There was a hearty laugh when some one asked where was the military chest, but none of us liked to confess that we thought the joke an ugly one, and even those who liked it least took their share in the merriment. Some one, I forget who it was, confided to me a small carpet-bag with the General's name on it, two heavy bridles, and a copper kettle. I was given to understand that they were Garibaldi's own property, and I did not disdain to take care of them, the more as I saw the General himself toiling up the hill in front of me with a rather heavy bundle slung over his sword on his shoulder, and his grey overcoat carried in a strap with the other hand.

As we struggled in a long line up the cliffs, halting at moments to take breath, or turning to have a look at the scene beneath, I came close up to Garibaldi on a little platform of ground which overlooked the sea for an immense extent. He was gazing over the broad expanse of tranquil blue sea, and looking at a

ship which, some six miles away, was heading to the south under easy steam. She dipped her ensign as we looked, and Garibaldi, calling out "That was for *me*!" added, "Viva l'Inghilterra!"—England for ever—and now we could plainly see the broad stripes of the British flag as they floated out to the breeze; and we cheered again and again, in the hope they might hear us.

A sailor near me somewhat damped the ardour of my delight by whispering that the ship must have been returning some salute of another vessel, for it was impossible she could have seen us, or known what we were.

I was told that evening that I was to accompany Menotti's brigade; with which, until a vacancy occurred on the staff, I was to serve, but that I might reasonably expect to be made an officer within the month. I was not at all impatient; if I had less of influence, I had fewer responsibilities.

We were scarcely on the heights of Melito when scouts were sent out on all sides to apprise the country people of our presence, and let them know of a good market for their produce.

We were rather a sorry set to look at—our clothes ragged, our equipment scanty, our cheeks the very reverse of plump or rosy; and with all this, I never in my life saw a merrier or jollier party than we presented on that 25th of August, as we sat down on the crest of a hill over the sea, and proceeded to make our first breakfast in Calabria.

It was late in the afternoon before the scouts returned, but we were so much occupied in the interval cleaning arms and accoutrements, filling up the various rolls—for we had left about twelve hundred of ours behind us at Catania—that we had little time to think of other things. At length the tidings got about that the scouts had returned with evil tidings, but what they were, none could say. Some averred that all the reinforcements which were to have joined us had dispersed and disbanded. Others, that Ratazzi had changed his mind, and determined that, instead of to Rome, we were to go to Greece and assist the revolution there; a few, wiser than these, opined that we were to be discouraged by all the means the government could command, and compelled to lay down our arms and go home again. However men took the tidings, the gloom became general. Such a revulsion from the joy of the morning was almost impossible to imagine.

From a young Cararese attached to the staff, called Fabricotti, I learned the truth. The peasantry had all fled. The agents of the government had been before us, and had actually swept the country clean of everything. They had moved the corn from the granaries and driven away the cattle. So that Sahara itself was not a more perfect desert than the heights of Melito.

It was true this system could not have been extended to the towns, and so the General had sent Corte forward as far as Reggio, to explore

the state of feeling there, and learn what means of subsistence were obtainable. The night which followed was a very dreary one! We lighted our fires and tried to be jovial and soldier-like; but our songs died away in sadness, and the shrill boyish accent of the "Vivas" served only to remind us of what stuff our force was made of.

It was, I am told, discussed on that night, between Garibaldi and his officers, whether the force should not at once be broken up under different leaders, to take the paths through the mountains, and rally somewhere near Catanzaro. I am certain, had the plan been adopted, we should have succeeded. Through the tracts we could have taken all pursuit would be impossible, and as we went further north, we should have found abundance of everything.

The General, however, was full of the idea that the towns would at once declare for him, and he replied to all arguments by saying, "Wait till we see what news Corte will bring us!"

We never did hear—at least I, and such as myself, never did hear—the tidings he brought back. We only knew that we were to march by the coast line, in the direction of Reggio. I suspected that all was not so satisfactory as it looked, by a visit I had from old Doctor Riboli, a man whose yellowish hair and blue eyes gave him a "false air" of Garibaldi.

"What have you got," asked he, "in the way of old linen, fit for making lint and bandages?"

"Are we come that far, doctor?" asked I, with a laugh.

"Not quite; but we shall to-morrow or next day. That blessed municipality of Reggio, who, we were told, had their wives and daughters at work making red shirts since June last, have now sent a deputation to beg that we will not enter their city, for if we do, they say, it will be a civil war! Civil war! Did any one ever hear the like; but it's all Cialdini—he has done it all."

This was the first time I had heard Cialdini's name thrown out as that of our greatest adversary and enemy; but I believe, from that very hour, I never listened five minutes to any conversation without finding him mentioned. It was Cialdini sent the fleet and the army; Cialdini starved, circumvented, hunted us. It was he terrified the people against succouring or joining us; and it was he who, to pursue us, selected certain regiments of "Old Piedmont," as they call it, whose hatred of Garibaldi arose from all their envy of his glorious career in Lombardy.

Then we all knew of the personal dislike which subsisted between our General and Cialdini, and we saw at once why the minister had selected him. It was a sort of duel that they had planned; so, at least, we regarded it. We moved slowly on to San Gio, Menotti's corps leading; the men were in tolerable spirits, and sang various patriotic songs as we went. In my capacity of Orderly I had treated myself to a horse, or, rather, a Calabrian pony; but he was such a

mangy-looking beast—so low before, so big-headed, and so crooked in the legs, that I never mounted him without causing shouts of laughter, and I finished by making him a pack-horse for myself and my friends, and walked behind him.

Two citizens of Reggio arrived in our camp that night, and informed us that a large force of the royal troops were in march from Naples, with mounted scouts, and several field-guns. They brought some newspapers, but all in the government interest, and all speaking of us in terms of contempt and derision.

On the whole, we took these criticisms very well. We treated them as calumnies of the hour, and counted on the future for our vindication. A sort of vision of Rome—a triumphal entry into Rome—seemed to pass before our eyes continually, and we used to discuss details of the ceremonial, not only with a grave air of certainty, but sometimes with all the warmth of passion. Whether, for instance, the King was to be on Garibaldi's right or left hand? What place was to be given to the staff of Garibaldi? Where were the Picciotti to come? I remember well we had grown very hot in discussing whether the red shirts were to form a corps d'élite in the army, or retire—until wanted for Venice—on a pension.

When the bugle called a halt, and we drew up in a large field of potatoes, some of us had eaten nothing for twenty-four hours, and were soon seen digging up the roots and eating them ravenously, raw as they were. Strict orders had been issued the day before against the slightest transgression of this sort, and an injunction given to remember that we were not in an enemy's country, but amongst friends, who would judge of our patriotism by our respect for honesty. The sergeants and corporals, therefore, hurried hither and thither, warning the men against pillage, and affecting to take down the names of the pillagers, when suddenly came Fabricotti to say, "The field has been paid for, my lads. It is all your own, and the General says you are free to it!" I suppose that a meal of potatoes scarcely ever excited more heartfelt gratitude, or called forth a lustrier cheer!

Next day, 28th, we moved down the slope of the hill towards Reggio; our advanced guard was under Nullo, and I accompanied them to carry orders. Every one was very serious that day. It was a hot sultry one, with a sirocco wind, and it is needless to say how such days affect the Italian temperament, or the amount of depression they can inflict. There was scarcely a word spoken in the ranks, and although the advanced guard had been selected out of picked men, the more to impress the folk at Reggio with our force, we were more like brigands than soldiers. Red-shirted, and without coats, we carried each a canvas-bag over one shoulder, of whatever eatable we could find. A bottle or a gourd balanced this on the other side; our scanty wardrobe hung from our musket behind, and usually finished in a pair of strong

boots, while our trousers, rolled up to the mid-leg to escape the dirt of the roads, completed a trim not at all calculated to inspire prepossession in our favour.

"One would think we were galley-slaves, from the way they look at us," said a comrade of mine, and he himself, the son of a great Lombard family, was one of the wildest figures of the mass; but we had soon to learn, indeed, what effect we produced upon strangers, for a deputation from the town council of Reggio, who had come out to meet us, were so terrified by our scarecrow aspect, that they could scarcely speak. When they did succeed in finding words, it was to tell us that a major of Bersaglieri was already with his command outside Reggio, and two mortar-boats stationed off the shore, with orders if Garibaldi entered and received the hospitality of the town, to reduce it to ashes. I hastened back with this message to the General, and found him seated under a chestnut-tree, with a map on his knees, and a crust of bread in his hand. He listened calmly to my tidings, and then asked the name of the major of Bersaglieri.

I answered that he was a Hungarian named Eberhardt.

"Uno de nostri! one of our own!" cried Garibaldi, with an energy I saw for the first time, but whether uttered with a feeling of joy or disappointment, I am unable to say. "Well!" said he, after a pause, "if Reggio declines our company, it would hardly be polite to press it on them. Let Nullo fall back."

VII. ASPROMONTE.

We marched from two in the afternoon till past midnight, taking the direction of San Lorenzo at first, but after a while turning at the angle of a large farm-house called Protolo, and directing our steps to Aspromonte in the mountains. Aspromonte was well known to all the Garibaldians of the first expedition, and they held that mountain pass against an overwhelming force of Neapolitans.

Aspromonte was a sort of ridge between two mountains, with a narrow gorge in front, and a dense forest behind; a dreary drizzling rain had fallen for the last hour of our steep march, and as we gained the top it began to fall heavier, and at last increased to a perfect down-pour. The general took up his quarters in one of the two shepherd's huts—the only habitable spots in this wild region—and I made him a sort of bed of pine-branches, over which I spread his cloak. "A rude couch," said he, smiling, "but we'll be better off in the Vatican!" I was very grateful when he told me to remain where I was for the night. He said it, pretending he might want my services, but I saw it was out of kindness, for I was coughing severely, and greatly oppressed in breathing.

It thundered all that night so tremendously that many of us thought the bombardment of Reggio had really begun, and that the fleet were knocking the old town to pieces. One

or two, who could not resist the curiosity to see the event, went down the mountain towards St. Stephano, and got taken prisoners for their pains.

At daybreak we were summoned by the bugle, but did not really turn out till after six o'clock, when the rain had ceased, and the sun shone forth splendidly. The scouts had brought news that the royal forces were pushing forward at speed, and would be up with us before noon, and some said that on the crest of the hill behind us the black plumes of the Bersaglieri had been seen already.

Garibaldi drew up his force on the plateau where we passed the night. The left under Menotti, Corte with the right, he himself in the centre. It was clear to us all there was to be a battle, and equally clear that, posted where we were, with our flanks defended by the mountains, and a deep glen in front, we could resist a force of ten times our own number. The preparations were begun leisurely enough, but afterwards pressed forward with more haste, as a small body of Bersaglieri were seen coming up the valley in loose skirmishing order, and scattering widely towards our flanks as they came.

When Fabricotti told Garibaldi that the skirmishers were advancing, he seemed so absorbed in thought as not to hear him. "Non si puo. This cannot be, or it must not be," he kept repeating for several seconds to himself; then sending for Cairoli, he whispered some words in his ear.

"Here they are! here they come!" cried several voices from our men, and Garibaldi, throwing his cloak over his shoulders, walked hastily forward to the front. There was much confusion at this moment. Cairoli wanted, I believe, to meet the Bersaglieri with the bayonet. Menotti, too, said he could answer for his Picciotti holding their own against the troops, and all along the whole line there was a seeming eagerness to show the General that they were not unworthy of him.

As soon as Garibaldi gained the front of the line, where he stood about a dozen paces or so in advance, his aides-de-camp hastened on either side with orders, and the bugles sounded the command, No firing! It was not without a murmur that this order was heard; for already the sharp whistle of more than one ball had been noted from the Bersaglieri below. The General, however, not merely satisfied with transmitting the order through his staff, shouted aloud to the men, "No firing! no firing!"

The Bersaglieri were still coming on at a run, and, steep as the ascent was, seemed to vie with each other who should be first; suddenly they stopped in their advance, and converging their fire on the centre, where Garibaldi stood, fired a tremendous volley. He had but time to repeat his warning once more, ending with "Viva l'Italia!" when he fell. I have heard some say that he walked some steps before he fell, but I believe the fact was he could not move one single step, and fell as he attempted it.

He was quickly carried into the "boschetta," and surrounded with a number of his staff. The wound was at first deemed so serious that the word "amputation" was dropped incautiously by some one. "I am quite ready," said the General; "do whatever you think fit, and do it at once." He continued to smoke his cigar while the surgeons consulted. The world knows what followed, nor have I the presumption to insert in my humble story other incidents than those that befel me, or that I witnessed.

I heard, as we all heard, the order not to fire, and I heard, too, Menotti's cry, as his father fell, "Charge them! à la baionetta!" and the line rushed over the slope, and the bayonets of the twolines crossed. A loud shout of "Viva l'Italia!" was now raised, I know not from whence or by whom, but every musket was raised at once, and one hoarse cheer of "Viva l'Italia!" resounded from both sides.

"Disarm them! disarm them!" was heard on all sides, and for a moment none of us knew to whom it was addressed. We scarcely knew there had been a contest, so quickly was it over. The truth was not long in declaring itself—we were all prisoners, and some eighteen or twenty of us were more or less wounded.

Several officers made their escape—Nicotera amongst the rest—at this moment, and, gaining the coast, got away to Malta or Corfu. For a moment or two I felt disposed to follow them; but I thought, "What signifies now what becomes of me; the best of us all, lies wounded and bleeding there. Let us at least share his fate if we cannot share his fame."

I was marched away with a very ignoble looking squad of Picciotti to Reno, and thence down to the coast. We were given a crust of the blackest bread and some water, and were guarded by a strong escort. When the poor boys—the majority were no more than boys—made an attempt to sing, to show how bravely they bore their captivity, a rude blow with a musket-stock suppressed the effort, and they were ordered not even to utter a word as they went. We passed the night on the sea-shore, houseless and supperless. The troops lighted their fires and got out their camp-kettles, but we had neither, and sat in grim groups whispering together till we fell asleep.

Though perhaps, had I declared my condition and station, the officer who had charge of us might have treated me with more consideration, I thought it would not be generous to separate myself from the poor fellows my companions. Besides, I had obtained a degree of influence over them at this time. That long dreary day's march will be a nightmare to me so long as I live. The scorching sun, the heavy sand, the bloodshot eyes, from the damp at night and the

glare of the sun by day, the weary feet, and the thirst, needed not the heavy heart I carried, to make my misery complete.

At Reggio we saw two frigates; one I recognised as the Duke of Genoa. While we stood on a point of rock gazing at her, several boats rowed out and lingered alongside of her, and from a remark of an officer to his comrade, as they looked through their glasses, I learned that Garibaldi was in one of the boats, waiting to be hoisted on board. I would have willingly given my note of hand for a thousand francs for that telescope in the captain's fingers, to have got one last look at our poor General.

It was then that a young man in a staff uniform came hastily up, and said, "Is there a certain prince here?"—giving my family name. I answered, and he told me that Garibaldi had included me in the list of those he wished to have along with him, and that I must make what haste I could or I should be too late. I was not long in my adieux, and I ran with all speed towards a boat that I saw about to shove off.

When we gained the deck of the Duke, however, it was found that we were eight more than the number accorded to Garibaldi.

"Take them on shore again," said the captain. "I cannot have them here without orders; or," said he, after a pause, "row across to the other frigate and ask General Cialdini what's to be done with them?"

The messenger came back very speedily, and whispered his answer to the captain, who smiled, and said,

"Oh no; I'd rather take them, than *that*."

On the following evening we entered the Gulf of Spezia, and were landed in the old Lazaretto, called Varignano. Some rooms had been arranged for Garibaldi, and we were lodged beside him, with a kitchen for our own accommodation.

Where I write this, we have a large, not very clean, and not well-ventilated chamber, where we sleep, and a smaller room, which looks out on the bay of La Grazia, where we dine. Lounging at its window we can gaze on the three-decker whose guns point towards us, but which, by a strange "mal à propos," carries her name—The Garibaldi—still on her stern. It is in a corner of this chamber where our poor fellows sit and smoke, and ponder over their lot, that I write these lines.

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